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Shawn Anthony Kalis

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ISRAEL AND THE GOLAN HEIGHTS:

A GEOSTRATEGIC ANALYSIS

by

Shawn Anthony Kalis, BGS

Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of the University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

The University of Texas at Austin

December 1994

ISRAEL AND THE GOLAN HEIGHTS:

A GEOSTRATEGIC ANALYSIS

APPROVED BY

SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:

Supervisor _____

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_____

Esther Raizen

To my wife Dawn, and my children,
Jennifer, Andrew, Benjamin and Reneé.
Thank you for your support and patience.
I love you all.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

Israel and the Golan Heights:

A Geostrategic Analysis

by

Shawn Anthony Kalis, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 1994

SUPERVISOR: Aaron Bar-Adon

During recent peace negotiations between Israel and Syria, Israel's Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, has declared that Israel is willing to withdraw from the Golan Heights in order to secure "real peace" with Syria. Although no definitive plan of withdrawal has been disclosed at this time, reactions to the idea of pulling out have been mixed. Supporters argue that Israel no longer needs the Golan and should quickly withdraw to show its earnestness to have peace with Syria, while opponents fear that a withdrawal would be a serious blow to state security.

The purpose of this study is to defend the argument that the Golan Heights are geostrategically vital to Israel's national interests and, therefore, should not be returned to Syria in whole or in part.

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INTRODUCTION

On September 13, 1993, a historic event took place in Washington D.C. which became the first real step in the long journey toward genuine peace in the Middle East. Two long time and bitter enemies, Israel, led by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), led by Yasir Arafat, shook hands on the South Lawn of the White House moments after signing a "Declaration of Principles". This declaration, which granted Palestinians self-government in the occupied Gaza and West Bank, took place four days after a mutual recognition agreement was released by Israel and the PLO.

The next day, September 14, 1993, Syria's President, Hafez al-Assad, privately expressed to President Clinton a "positive and wholly supportive" view of the initiative. (Schmidt 1993a). This long awaited ray of hope came one week after Israel and Syria completed their eleventh round of non-productive negotiations over the Golan Heights. The negotiations, which began 22 months earlier in Madrid Spain, crawled along as Syria and Israel stood uncompromisingly toe to

toe on the same two issues which first came to the negotiating table after the 1973 Yom Kippur War: Syria tenaciously demanded that Israel surrender all 483 square miles of the Golan Heights it occupied during the 1967 war, while Israel staunchly insisted on a Syrian promise of full peace (Schmidt 1993a).

The present dialogue between Israel and Syria concerning the disposition of the Golan Heights has generated many different arguments as to what the extent of agreement between these two nations should be and how, if at all, the area should be divided between the two nations. The extremes range from a total return to Syria of the entire Golan Heights on the one hand, to no concession at all on the other. Many arguments have been given for both sides; however, the following three themes often recur in the ongoing discussions concerning the Syrian-Israeli negotiations: national security, water and the Golan Settlements. These three areas will be the primary topics of discussion in this study with the goal of proving why Israel should not let go of the Golan Heights.

In addition to the above mentioned three points, an examination will also be made of the major socio-cultural and socio-political differences between Israel and

Syria. The purpose of this investigation is to demonstrate that Israel has a very real reason to distrust Syria based on the socio-cultural and socio-political differences which have contributed to past conflicts and which continue to create barriers that hinder the peace process today.

The Issue of National Security

The first argument in support of Israel's withdrawal centers around the strategic or military issue regarding the Golan Heights and their relationship to Israel's national security. Advocates of the proposal that most, or all, of the Golan should be returned to Syria, defend their position by arguing that the Golan Heights no longer have strategic value for Israel's national Security. Proponents of this view point out that arguments defending retention of the Golan are outdated in the light of modern warfare and that the idea of "strategic depth", or the existence of a "buffer zone", no longer applies in today's high-tech environment and therefore should not be considered in negotiating a settlement with Syria (Sicker 1989, 186).

This idea, that modern warfare diminishes the strategic value of "ground," is not a new one for it was

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upheld in the past by prominent figures such as Secretary of State William Rogers in the early 1970s and Hafez al-Assad himself, who in 1977 ridiculed the concept of secure borders (Seale 1988, 296; Sicker 1989, 186). Their argument is built upon the idea that today's advanced weaponry, like long range missiles, state-of-the-art aircraft, smart-bombs; nuclear, chemical and biological capabilities, instantaneous communications and sophisticated electronic battlefields, negate any need for military forces to actually occupy "ground" in order to defend a country. In other words, "real estate" today is not as important in the defense of nations as it was in past wars.

In supporting the argument that the Golan Heights are too strategically important for Israel to be returned to Syria, and that the Israelis should not give back any portion--certainly not the entire region--this study attempts to expose the flaw in the, "return the Golan for peace" argument. An examination of the terrain of the Golan in relation to modern military warfare tactics and strategy will demonstrate the strategic importance that this geographic area has in maintaining peace between Syria and Israel.

The Issue of Water

In addition to national defense, water is an important reason for Israel to keep the Golan Heights. The ratio of water resources available to the amount of water exploited is fast approaching the critical level in the Middle East (Perry 1993, 19-20). As nations begin to look for new ways to meet the increasing demand for water, allocation of water from existing resources becomes of primary importance. Any manipulation of water sources can become a point of contention and possibly lead to armed conflict.

One of the main sources of water for Israel is the Jordan River. This source, as well as the Yarmuk river which feeds into the Jordan river south of the Sea of Galilee, is shared with the country of Jordan. Two other neighbors of Israel, Syria and Lebanon, also share Jordan water sources. In the past, attempts were made by Syria, in conjunction with other Arab states, to use water as a weapon against Israel. This was done by making attempts to interfere with the Jordan headwaters, one of which originates in the Golan Heights. The attempt was unsuccessful; however, the whole issue became a contributing factor to events which led up to the 1967

War.

The fact that the Golan contains one of the main water sources for the Upper Jordan river, and therefore contributes substantially to Israel's overall water supply, is an important issue that must not be overlooked by the proponents of a Golan withdrawal.

This study will examine the water issue, past and present, in order to show why Israel must maintain control of these vital water resources and hence the Golan Heights.

The Issue of Israeli Settlements in the Golan

After the 1967 War, Israel immediately began developing Settlements in the Golan Heights, first to occupy the newly acquired land for the purposes of national defense, and, second, to meet the needs of a growing population (Held 1989, 257). These Golan settlements have grown to become a productive part of Israel and the people living there consider the Golan to be as much a part of the nation as the Negev (Melrod 1987, 171); settlers do not feel that it would be right for the government to force them to leave their homes. From 1967 to the present, the government has encouraged permanent settlement of the Golan by creating long range plans for

establishing settlements, supporting the settlers with building projects and even officially annexing the area and placing it under Israeli Law. Many feel that a withdrawal from the Golan will mean that the government has turned its back on its own people in order to grab at the illusion of peace with its former enemy.

Proponents of a Golan withdrawal argue that evacuating the settlements there will be no different than the 1982 evacuation of the Sinai settlements following the 1979 Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt; therefore, the Golan settlements are a non-issue.

In response to that argument, this study will show that the Sinai case is not valid due to military and economic factors in the Golan settlements which will not support such a withdrawal.

The Socio-cultural and Socio-political Issue

The fourth and final issue which this study will encompass is in the areas of socio-cultural and socio-political differences between Syria and Israel. Although not directly related to geographic factors associated with the Golan Heights, it is an area which gives Israel a genuine cause to doubt the sincerity of

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Syria's intentions in the ongoing peace negotiations.

Supporters of the "land for peace" policy cite the success with Egypt, the PLO, and now with Jordan as proof that lasting peace is possible with Syria. This argument will be addressed with the presupposition that significant differences exist between the ideologies, attitudes, actions, beliefs and means of communication of Arabs and Jews as a whole, but that the case of Syria presents special problems for the Israelis. These differences, along with some potential internal socio-cultural and socio-political factors within Syria which may directly affect the near future, raise the question of whether genuine, lasting peace between Syria and Israel can really be achieved and maintained.

Format of the Paper

To accomplish the above goals, this paper is divided into three parts. The first part introduces background information, both geographical and historical, needed to understand the course of events which have led up to the present situation between Syria and Israel. This section deals with the evolution of control over the Golan prior to the establishment of the state of Israel, the past wars and conflicts in which the

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Golan Heights were involved, and the post war occupation.

Part II addresses the arguments of national defense, water and the settlements and their relation to the geographic area of the Golan. This section will explain the reasons why the Golan Heights must remain in Israel's possession

Finally, Part III examines the socio-cultural and socio-political factors affecting the relationship between Syria and Israel, both past and present, and how these factors continue to impact the present peace negotiations and the possibility of a lasting settlement.

PART I

ROOTS OF THE GOLAN CONFLICT:
A GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

CHAPTER TWO

GEOGRAPHY OF THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

"Now the nature of the ground is the
fundamental factor in aiding the army
to set up its victory."
-Mei Yao-ch'en, *Sun Tsu, The Art of
War*

The Golan Heights are comprised of a large geographic unit that was known in antiquity as Bashan, in Biblical times, and as Gaulanitis, or Gawlān, during the Greek and Roman periods. Located East of the Sea of Galilee, the area extends from the base of Mount Hermon in the north to the Yarmuk river in the south (figure 1)(LaSor 1982a, 520). It is part of a trough cutting through wide expanses of lava which erupted from ancient volcanoes in connection with a formation of the Jordan or Levant rift. (Safran 1978, 75)

The Heights rise gently to the west of this trough, but descend steeply toward the Huleh Valley and the Sea of Galilee in cliffs, or scarps, with elevations of about 2,000 feet. Opposite these escarpments, to the west, are the Galilee escarpments, located across the Huleh basin or valley, and the Sea of Galilee. The Heights slope from the north, where they meet Mount Hermon (reaching a height of 3,000 feet), and extend to the south and east,
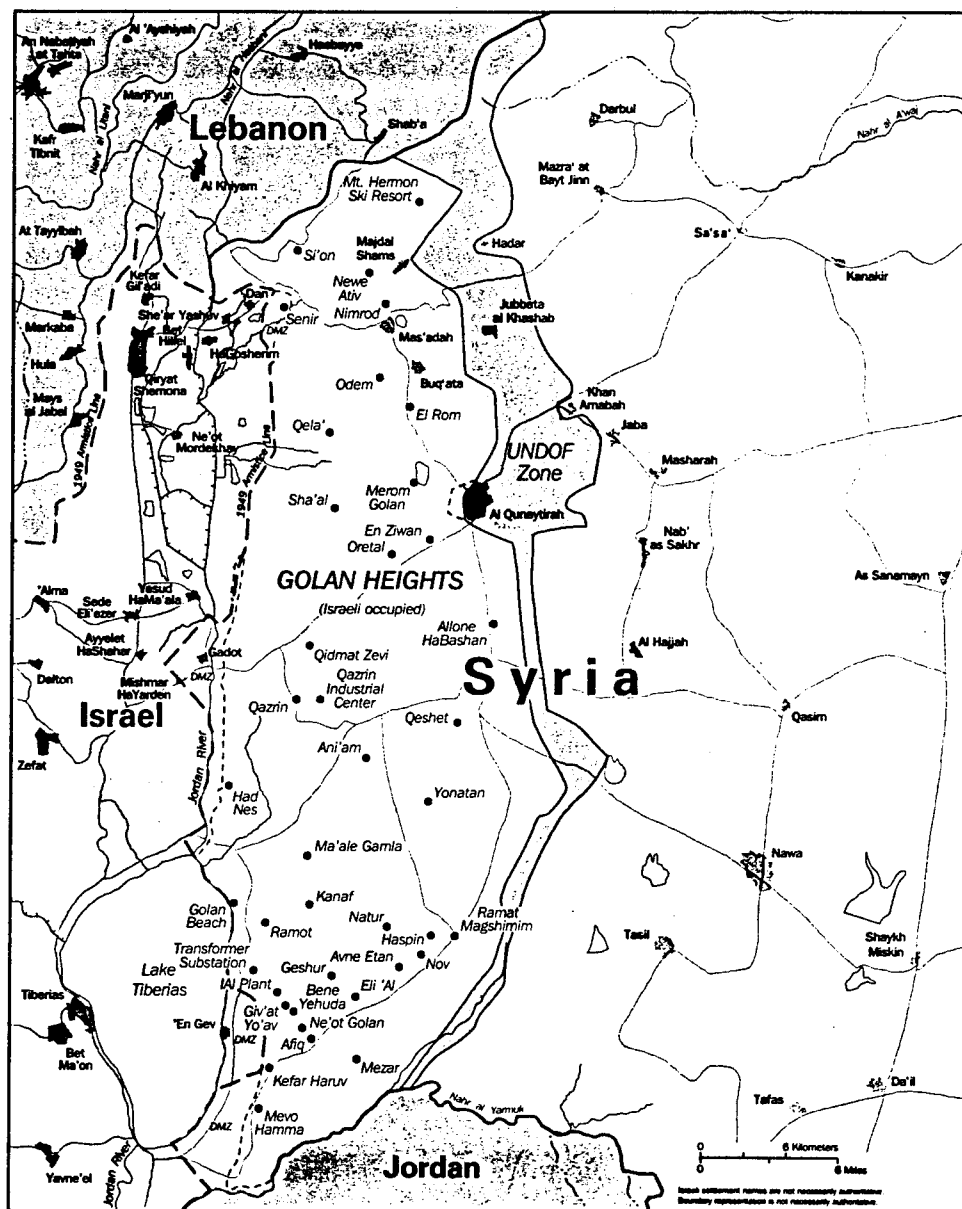
Figure 1. The Golan Heights. Map provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce. (Springfield, VA: National Technical Information Service, 1992)

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where they come down to about 1,000 feet above sea level (figures 2 and 3). The Golan Heights extend north to south about forty miles with a width of about 8-16 miles covering a total area of about 445 square miles (Held 1989, 257).

The geologic make-up primarily consists of olivine basalt, scoria, tuff and agglomerate (Bartov 1991). This make-up manifests itself in terrain which is mostly strewn with basaltic boulders, with a few areas covered with fertile soil formed by the volcanic dust (Safran 1978, 75).

The Huleh valley, one of the three main segments which comprise the Levant Rift System, consists of an almost completely flat floor with the steep slope of the Mountains of Naftali (at Menara) on the west and the strongly dissected slope of the basaltic Golan Plateau on the east (Held 1989, 34; Karmon 1971, 165).

The fertile soils of the valley consist mainly of undifferentiated sediments, deposited by the flowing waters, which were either washed down directly from the bordering mountains or transported by the springs and rivers which comprise the headwaters of the Upper Jordan river (Bartov 1991). In the past, because of the large amount of water deposited in the area, a large swamp

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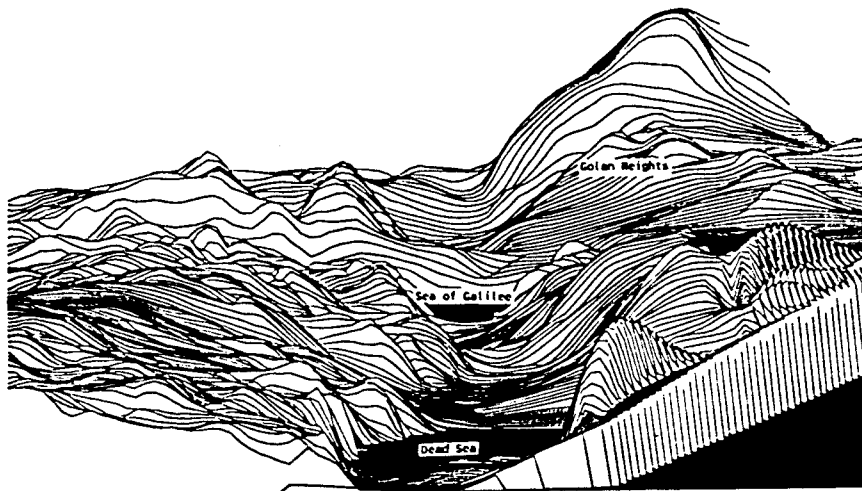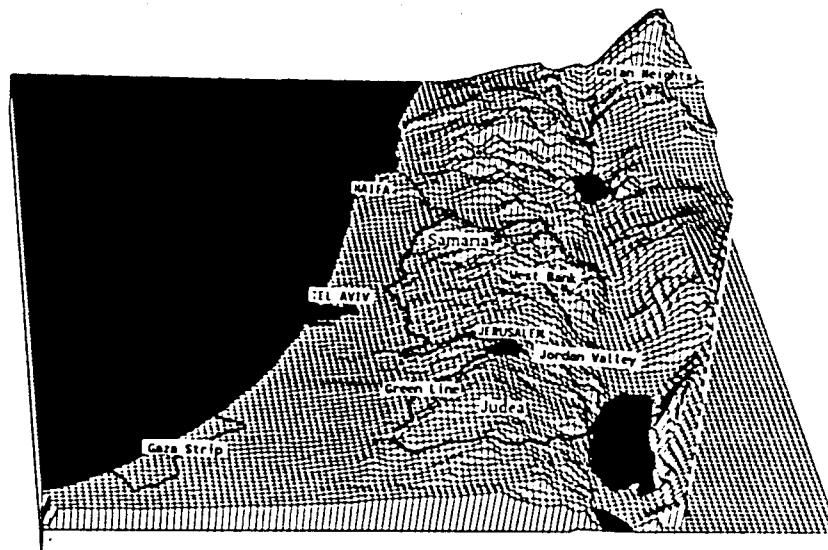
Figure 2. <u>Top</u>, The location and geographical features of the Golan Heights in relation to the rest of Israel; <u>bottom</u>, The disparity in elevation between the Golan Heights and the Huleh Valley. Reprinted, by permission, from Geoffrey Kemp, *The Control of the Middle East Arms Race* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1991), 204, 209. Copyright Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

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THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

■ Demilitarized zone since 1974

Mediterranean Sea

Lebanon

Israel

Syria

Kuneitra

Golan Heights

15 miles
24 km.

G A L I L E E

Haifa

Lake Kinneret

Ein Gev

Tiberias

A

B

Jordan

Cross-Section A-B

GOLAN HEIGHTS

GALILEE

LAKE KINNERET
(SEA OF GALILEE)

Tiberias

Kibbutz Ein Gev
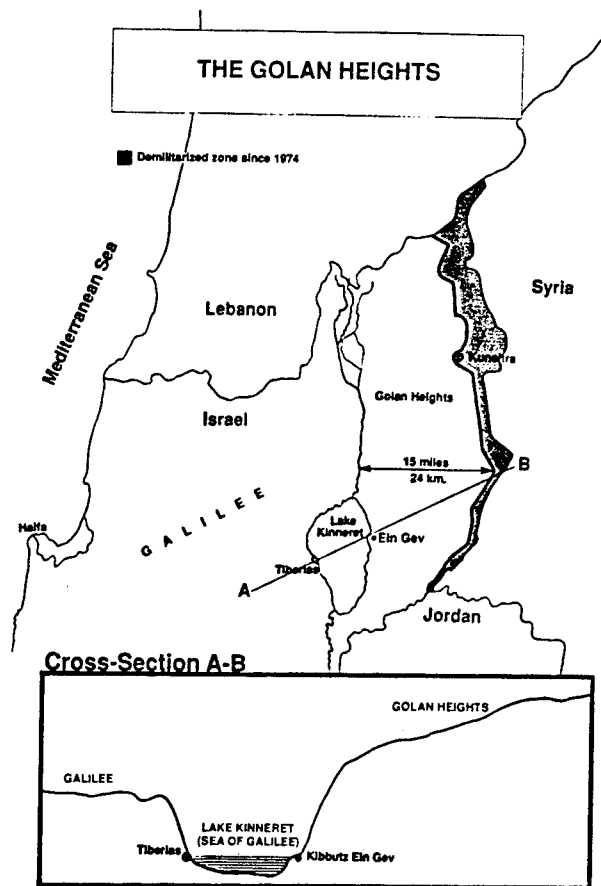
Figure 3. The cross-section and altitude difference between the Sea of Galilee and the Golan Heights (looking north toward the Sea of Galilee). Courtesy: Israel Information Center (Jerusalem 1991).

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existed in the valley which not only made much of the land unusable, but which also was a source of malaria. The swamp was subsequently drained by the Israelis after the establishment of the state of Israel. The significance of this draining project is covered further in the chapter on Israel, the Golan Heights and Water.

The Upper Jordan headwaters consist of three primary sources: the Hasbani River, which originates in Lebanon; the Dan River, which flows completely within Israel, and the Banias River, which, until 1967, had its origin in Syria. These three rivers converge about 3.6 miles inside the northern edge of the Huleh valley before flowing into the Sea of Galilee. In addition to the Banias in the north, another river in the south, the Yarmuk, has a brief contact with the Golan as it flows between Israel and Jordan prior to joining the Jordan River south of the Sea of Galilee. (Karmon 1971, 163; Naff 1984, 19-21)

Lying east of the Golan heights and west of Jabal al-Druze, a 3,300 ft. lava cone in extreme south west Syria, is the fertile plain area of Hawran. The western portion of this plain is a lava plateau which creates the Golan Heights and overlooks the sea of Galilee (Held 1989, 192).

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Throughout the ages this land has supported a wide variety of agricultural products from sheep and cattle in the north to field crops, fruits and olives in the south. (Efrat 1988, 117-118)

This geographic area, which has been under the control of many different nations throughout history, and which transferred from Syrian control to Israeli control during the 1967 war, has been the major stumbling block for successful ratification of a peace treaty.

The strategic importance of the Golan Heights is recognized by both Syria and Israel, as evidenced by the enormous amount of blood which was shed over it in the last quarter of a century, and a resolution of the issue of who maintains control of this vital piece of ground will only be accomplished when both sides feel secure in the final settlement; an arrangement which will be very difficult to achieve.

CHAPTER THREE

EARLY GOLAN SETTLEMENTS

"Now therefore, apportion this land
for an inheritance to the nine tribes,
and the half tribe of Manasseh...all
Mount Hermon,...and all the Kingdom of
Og in Bashan."
                    - Joshua 13:7,11

The Golan Heights, like so many other parts of the Middle East, have a history that can be traced back thousands of years. Many peoples and nations have passed through this area of the world and with the people came times of peace and prosperity and times of war and destruction. It is important to look back through history in order to better understand the roots of the conflict that has plagued this area of the world to this very day.

Prehistoric Golan

The earliest known evidences of human settlement in the Golan region date back to the beginning of the fourth millennium B.C., a time frame known to archaeologists as the Chalcolithic Period (ca. 4300-3300 B.C.). These early settlements consisted of tribal communities that supported themselves by farming the

surrounding pasture lands. They developed buildings, dams and walls utilizing the surrounding basalt stone. (Gonen 1992, 40-43; Mazar 1990, 63-65)

By Early Bronze Age I, ca. 3300-2900 B.C., settlements in Palestine began to change and, for an unknown reason, some areas, like the Golan, were permanently deserted (Ben-Tor 1992, 83; Mazar 1990, 88,94). The unexplained decline in Palestinian settlements reached its peak during Early Bronze Age IV, ca. 2350-2200 B.C., with no urban settlements remaining. Evidence of civilization in the Golan up to this point in time consists of a few enclosures that may have been dwelling places and multiple stone tables or burial structures called Dolmens. (Ben-Tor 1992, 123, Gophna 1992, 141; Mazar 1990, 113,161). The area remained relatively quiet until it once again flourished during the Iron Age, a time period where much of the history was recorded in both biblical and extra-biblical sources.

Early Israelite Settlements

The Bible makes reference to a city of refuge called Golan which is located in the territory of Bashan, an area east of Galilee and north of Gilead overlapping some of the same territory as Gaulanitis and Hauran

(figure 4). This territory was ruled by a King called Og whom the Israelites defeated in war. The area was given to the Israelite half-tribe of Manasseh and further expanded under the reigns of King David and his son King Solomon (figure 5). According to the Bible and ancient Assyrian and Babylonian records, this territory was subsequently lost to the Assyrian King Tiglath-pileser III in the days of Pekah, King of Israel (ca. 750 B.C.). After Pekah's subjugation, the area was never included as part of Israel again. (LaSor 1982b, 850; Num 21; Deut 3, 4, 29; Joshua 12, 13, 20, 21; 2 Kings 15)

The Roman Period

The area of the Golan remained sparsely populated and was not inhabited again until the end of the first century B.C. Archaeologists have made numerous discoveries dating to this period which show an extensive settling of the area. Finds include a number of settlements, consisting of many unwalled villages with roads, and large areas where stones were removed. This resettlement is credited to the accomplishments of King Herod the Great of Israel (47-4 B.C.). According to Flavius Josephus (ca. A.D. 37-100), a Jewish general, Roman citizen and historian, King Herod received the
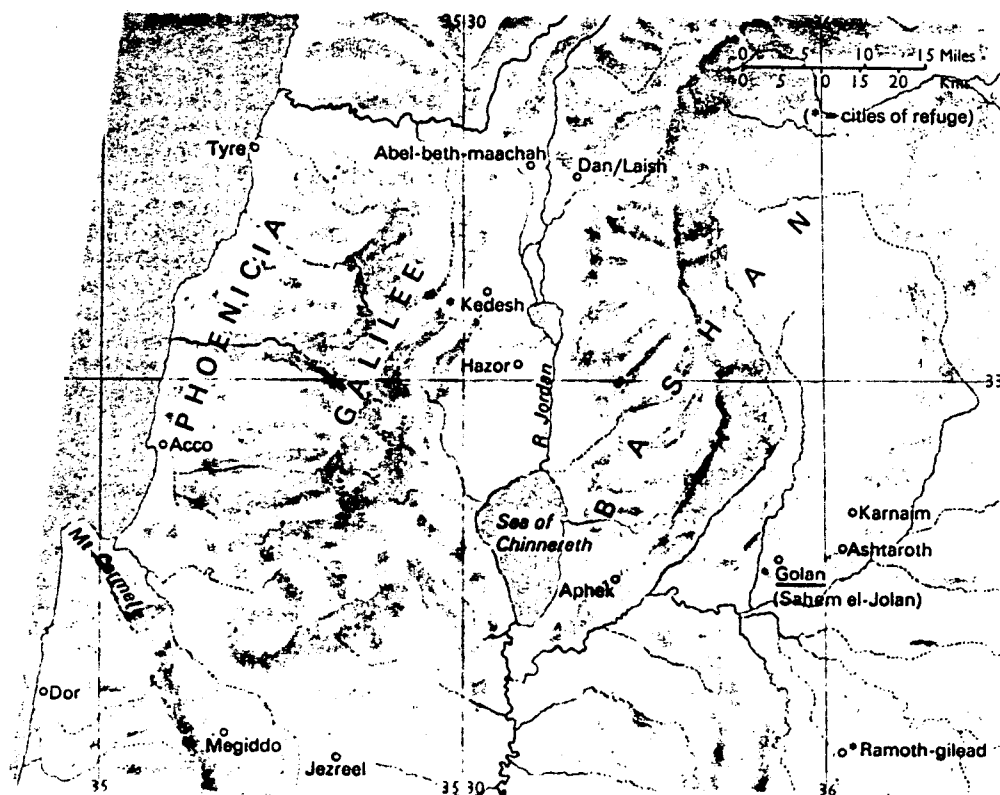
Figure 4. The Bashan and the biblical cities of refuge. Map from J. D. Douglas, ed. *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 574.
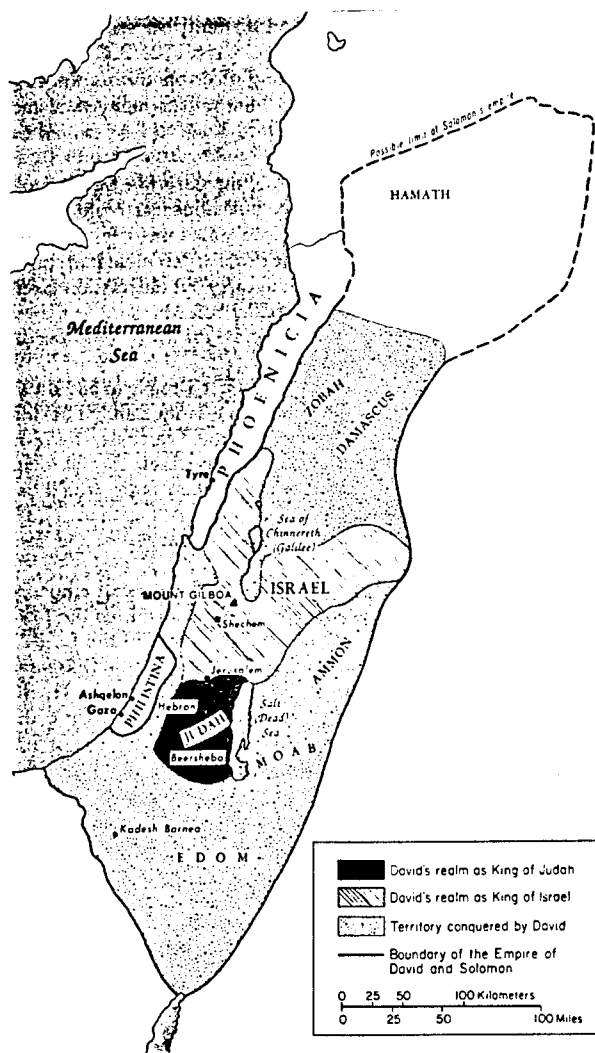
Figure 5. The territorial boundaries of King David and King Solomon. Map from Helen Chapin Metz, ed. *Israel a country study*, 3rd ed. (Washington D.C.: Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress, 1990), 12.

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territory of the Golan and adjacent lands from the Roman Emperor Augustus and settled it with many Jews (figure 6). These Jews later took an active role in the early battles during the revolt against Rome (A.D. 66-70), the most famous being the siege and subsequent conquest of Gamla (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews,* IV, I). The population of the area, more so in the southern Heights and the area north-east of the Sea of Galilee, increased as refugees from Judea poured in after the rebellion. (Ilan 1969, 6-8; Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII, I, 1; *Wars of the Jews*, I, IV,4: I, XXI, 3; IV, I)

The region east of the Sea of Galilee, called Gaulanitis by the Greeks, is frequently mentioned in the writings of Josephus. Gaulanitis formed the eastern boundary of Galilee and was part of the tetrarchy of the Philip mentioned in the Christian Bible. (LaSor 1982a, 520; Matt 14:1-3)

There is an abundance of archaeological evidence which supports the existence of a large Jewish population in the Golan during the period of Roman occupation. Archaeologists have uncovered Yehudiah, one of the Jewish settlements in the Golan that Josephus, then a Jewish general fighting against the Romans, fortified on the eve of the Great Rebellion, and Gamla, the site where

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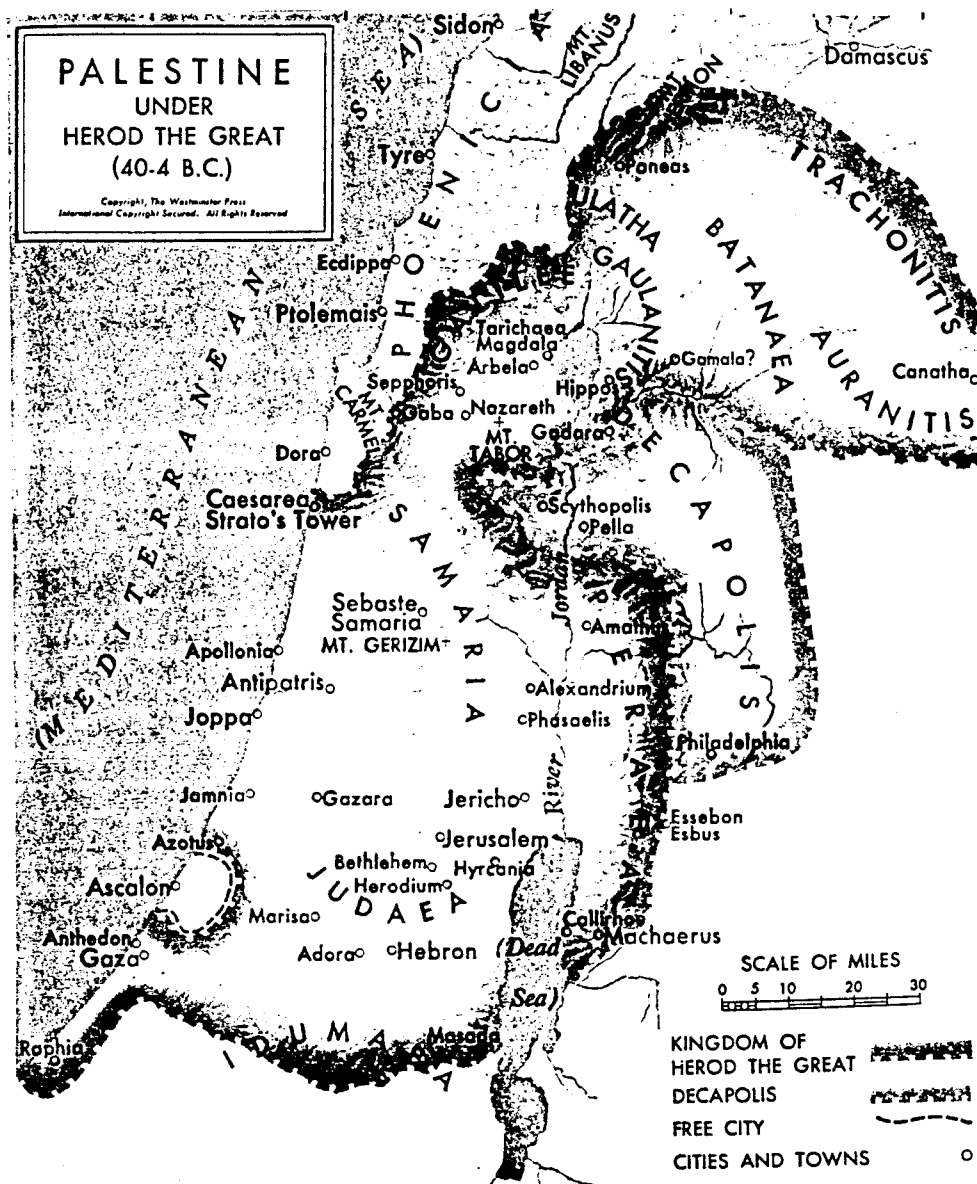
Figure 6. The Golan region under King Herod's rule. Map from John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), plate XIII.

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Josephus records the Roman siege and subsequent murder of 9000 Jews. (Ben-Tor, 1992, 6; Ilan 1969, 10; Schumacher 1976, 2, 71)

Post Roman Occupation to 1948

During the centuries that followed the Roman conquest, the area of the Golan Heights came under the control of the Byzantines, Arabs, Frankish Crusaders, Mamluks, Mongolians, and Turks (Schumacher 1976, 2-4).

Historical and archaeological evidence exists which shows that a Jewish presence remained in the Golan throughout most of these periods (Ilan 1969, 13; Schumacher 1976, 71).

However, by the mid 1800s, while the Jewish presence in Palestine steadily increased, the Golan population consisted entirely of non-Jews: Bedouins, Fellahin, Circassians, Druze and tribes of Syrian and Turkish descent (Schumacher 1976, 42-61). It was not until the later part of the century, 1891-1994, that Jews once again began to appear in the Golan. At that time Baron Edmond de Rothschild and some other groups of people who were "lovers of Zion" bought 25,000 acres of land in the Hauran and attempted to establish five settlements. The effort failed, primarily because the

Turks made a law in 1896 which prohibited Jews from settling in the Hauran, and the settlements eventually broke-up. After the failure of this settlement attempt the Jewish population in the Hauran area consisted of approximately ten families who remained and lived among the Moslem population. (Eliav 1978, ix)

After WWI, the area of the Golan Heights came under the British Palestine Mandate, in accordance with the San Remo Conference of 1920, but was later ceded by Britain to the French Mandate of Syria in 1923 (figure 7) (Fisher 1990, 394-395; Gilbert 1984, 8; Lacey [1980], 16).

In 1944 the United States and Soviet Union granted Syria unconditional recognition as a sovereign state with British recognition following one year later. Two years later, after a United Nations resolution called on France to evacuate the country, the French complied and were off of Syrian soil by April 15, 1946. Syria celebrated its own independence on April 17, 1946 with the Golan Heights remaining officially part of the new sovereign nation. (Collelo 1988, 25-26)

This was the disposition of the Golan Heights immediately prior to the British withdrawal from Palestine and the subsequent creation of the State of Israel.

Beirut
Sidon
Tyre
Kuneitra
Damascus
SYRIA
IRAQ
Acre
Haifa
Safed
Sea of Galilee
Tiberias
Irbid
Nablus
Salt
River Jordan
Tel Aviv
Jaffa
Ramla
Amman
Jerusalem
Ashkelon
Mediterranean Sea
Gaza
Bethlehem
Dead Sea
Rafah
Kerak
Beersheba
El Arish
Negev
EGYPT
Petra
Maan
HEDJAZ
later SAUDI ARABIA
Eilat
Akaba
Sinai

0   50
Miles

Separated from Palestine by Britain in 1921, and given to the Emir Abdullah. . Named Transjordan, this territory was at once closed to Jewish settlement

Ceded by Britain to the French Mandate of Syria, 1923

The Palestine Mandate, granted to Britain at the San Remo Conference in 1920, as the region of a Jewish National Home

—·— Approximate boundary of the area in which the Jews hoped to set up their National Home

Figure 7. The area of Palestine originally under the British Mandate in 1920 and the territory later ceded to Syria. Reprinted, by permission, from Martin Gilbert, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict. Its History in Maps* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), 8. Permission to reprint granted by Routledge Publishers London, England.

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CHAPTER FOUR

MODERN ISRAEL AND THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

"We shall never call for nor accept
peace. We shall only accept war. We
have resolved to drench this land with
your blood, to oust you aggressors, to
throw you into the sea."
                    - Hafez al-Assad, Syrian Defense
                      Minister, May 24, 1966

The present day negotiations between Israel and

Syria concerning the disposition of the Golan Heights are

a direct result of the Arab-Israeli conflict which began

just after WWI. The Zionists, who had been working since

the late 1800s to create a homeland in Palestine for the

Jews, received support for their cause from Great

Britain, in the form of the Balfour Declaration of 1917,

as well as from France and the United States.[1] (Metz 1990,

34; Zilkha 1992, 11)

During this same time period the seeds of Arab

---

[1]His Majesty's Government view with favour the
establishment in Palestine of a national home for the
Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to
facilitate the achievement of this object, it being
clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may
prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-
Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and
political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country". -
The Balfour Declaration, 2 November 1917. (Moore 1974,
32)

nationalism, sown by Arab intellectuals, army officers and students, began to grow; however, it would be years before the movement would become coordinated enough to receive support from the masses. This early nationalism, which was primarily cultural and focused on pride in the Arab heritage, soon grew to include a desire for self rule and freedom from Ottoman control; it was not directed toward the Zionist's until after WWI when the realization came that Arab independence would not soon be achieved. (Khouri 1968, 6-10; Metz 1990, 31-32)

Despite the presence of these two opposing movements in Palestine, and the fact that the Arabs began to feel cheated by the Western powers, the Zionists and Arab Nationalists did not clash full force until after the meeting of the first Palestinian-Arab Congress in 1919. The Congress declared that Palestine was a part of Syria and, therefore, fanned the flames of opposition towards the Zionists. The next year, under the newly established British Mandate over Palestine, the first major organized Arab attacks on Jewish settlements took place in response to Zionist political activities. As the attacks increased, the British realized the gravity of the situation and tried to placate the Arabs by placing restrictions on Jewish immigration. However, the damage

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had been done and the first steps were taken down the long road of violence which has ever since plagued this area of the world. (Khouri 1968, 21-27; Zilka 1992, 3-6)

It is from this background that the the Israeli-Syrian conflict over jurisdiction of the Golan Heights would one day spring forth.

The Birth of Israel

As the reality of a Jewish homeland drew near, a number of different proposals were introduced from various agencies and governments to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. Because the Golan Heights were ceded to Syria in 1923, none of the proposed Partition Plans contained the area of the Golan Heights as part of the new Jewish State (figure 8).

On 29 November 1947, the United Nations voted to partition Palestine into two separate states, one Arab and one Jewish. Although not the ideal they had hoped for, the Jews were happy to receive their own state; the Arabs were outraged and not only refused to accept the plan, but lashed out violently at the Jews. The British, who refused to support the plan on the grounds that it was not accepted by both parties, made a weak attempt to curb the violence and subsequently resorted to protecting

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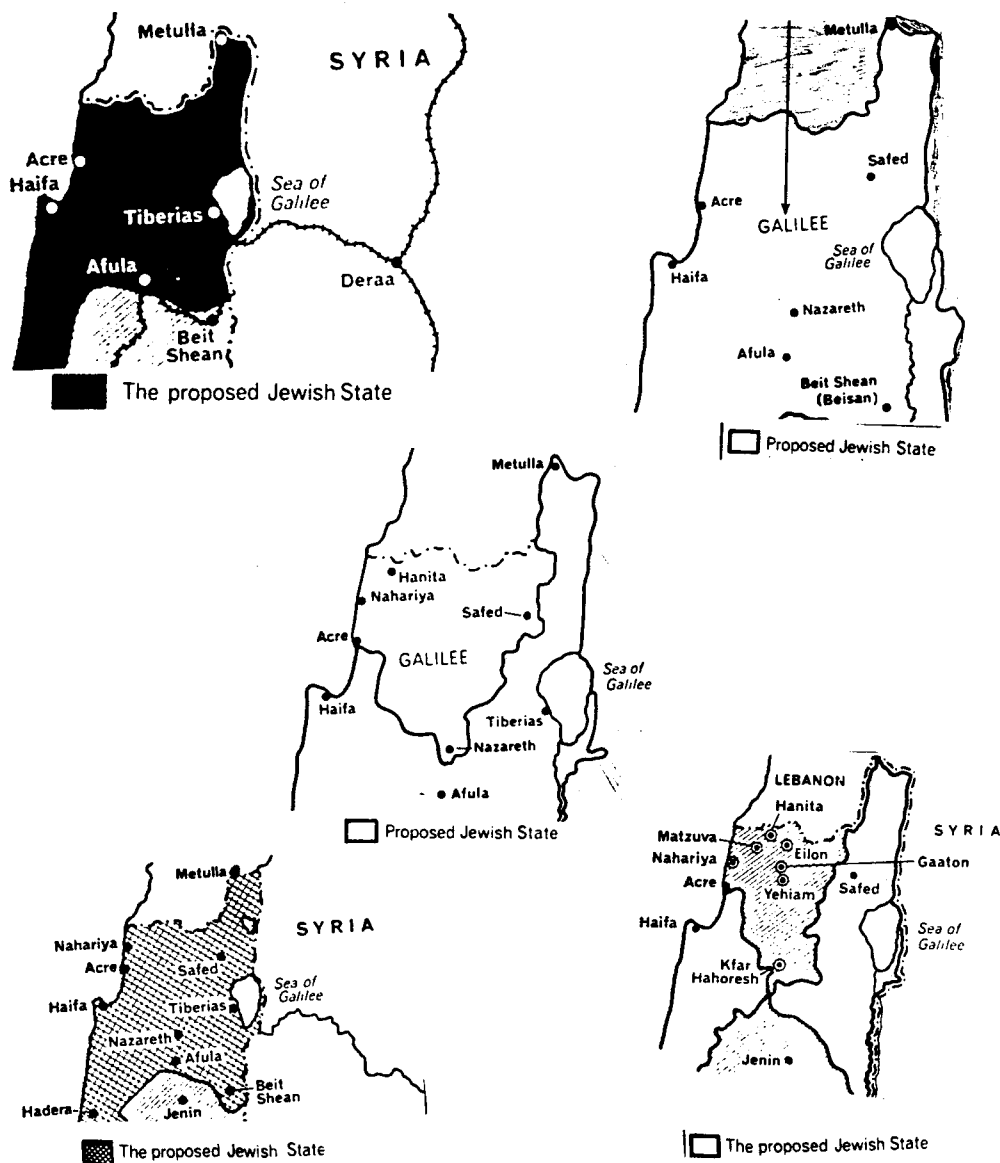
Figure 8. Proposed Partition Plans and the Golan Heights. **Top left**, 1937 Peel Commission Plan; **Top right**, 1938 Jewish Plan; **Center**, 1938 British Plan; **Bottom left**, 1946 Jewish Agency Plan; **Bottom right**, 1947 UN Plan. Maps reprinted, by permission, from Martin Gilbert, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict. Its History in Maps* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), 22, 26, 27, 35, 36. Permission to reprint granted by Routledge Publishers London, England.

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only their own interests as they withdrew from Palestine. (Khouri 1968, 57-59; Fisher 1990, 640)

The last British soldier left Palestinian soil on 14 May 1948, and that same day Israel declared its independence. The following day six Arab armies, Syria included, invaded the new country.

After a successful resistance, which included counter attacks with fierce fighting, the war ended in February 1949. However, Syria did not sign an armistice agreement until July 20, 1949. (Sachar 1989, 348-349)

The armistice agreement stipulated that the area between the cease-fire line and the original international border would be demilitarized and that no armed forces of either country could enter the zone (figure 9)(Bailey 1990, 66). The sovereign state of Israel was established and the Golan Heights remained in Syrian hands.

Syrian Aggression from the Golan Heights

In the period between Israel's independence and the 1967 war, the Arab states refused to acknowledge Israel as a sovereign nation. During this time Syria constantly harassed Israel by firing artillery shells from the Heights of Golan into settlements in the Huleh

Armistice demarcation lines
Demilitarized zone

| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 km |
| 0 | | 10 | | 20 | | 30 miles |

LEBANON

Dan
Kefar Szold
Malikya
(Malkieh)
Ouneitra
Ras El Nqura
(Rosh Hanikra)
Hula
SYRIA
Sasa
Rosh Pina
Mishmar Hayarden
Safad
Akko (Acre)
Capernaum
SEA OF GALILEE
(Lake Kinneret)
Tiberias
Haifa
Jaba
Nazareth
Ijzim
Ein Ghazal
Megiddo
Beisan
Jenin
Tirat Tsevi
Kefar Vitkin
Netanya
Tubas
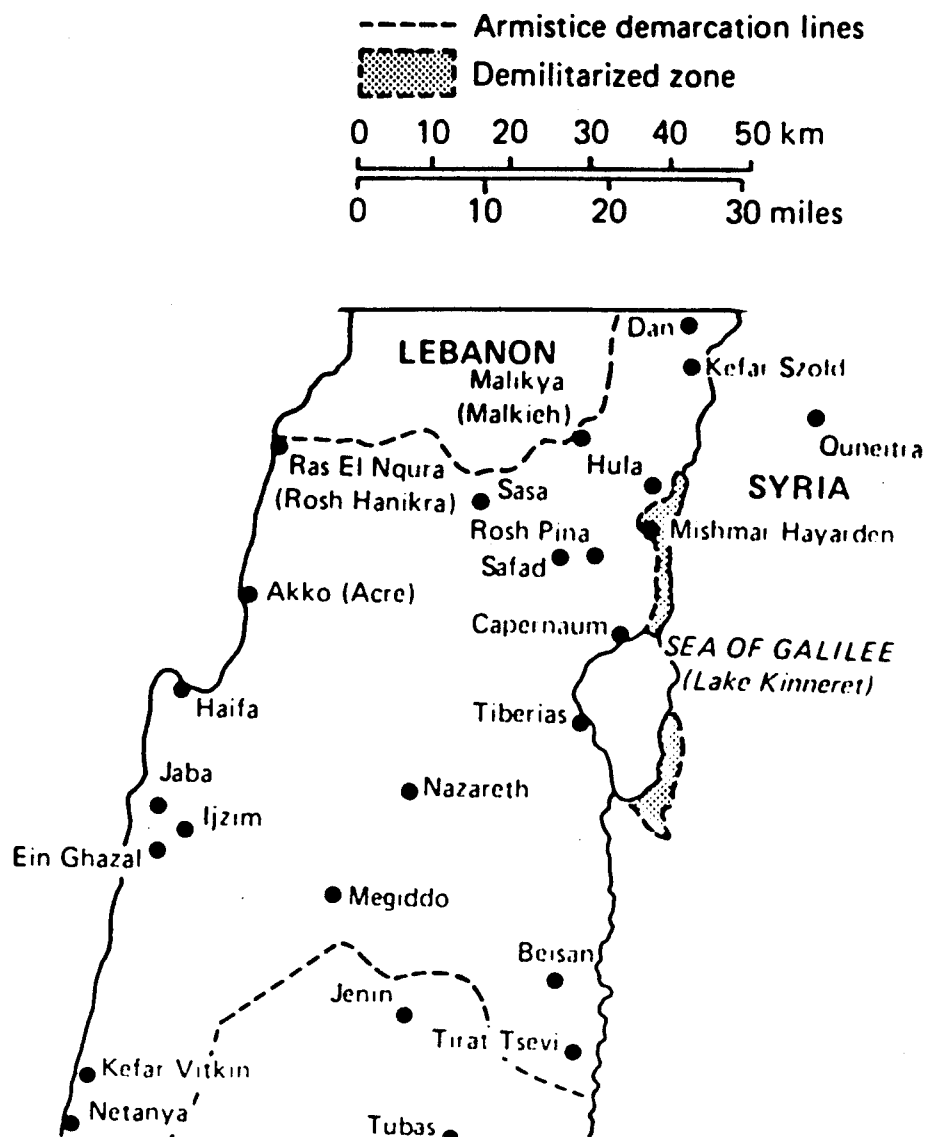
Figure 9. The 1949 Israeli-Syrian Armistice demarcation lines and demilitarized zones. Map from Sydney D. Bailey, *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1990), 68.

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valley on the eastern banks of the Sea of Galilee (Herzog 1982, 185; Sicker 1989, 92-95). Syria claimed that Israel instigated the shelling by blatantly violating the armistice agreement; they cited official United Nations documents which recorded complaints by Syria to the Security Council as evidence (Muslih 1993). Israeli farmers, who eventually had to work in armored tractors and under armed escort in order to be protected from Syrian aggression originating from the Heights, did enter the demilitarized zone in order to cultivate land; however, Israel believed that it had the right to cultivate those lands, areas which originally belonged to Israel in the 1947 Partition Plan, and, therefore, brought the matter of Syrian military hostility up before the United Nations Security council in October 1966. Five nations sponsored a resolution which criticized Syria's actions but it did not pass due to a Soviet veto. (Eban 1977, 313-314; Herzog 1982, 146-148; Gilbert 1984, 63-64)

In addition to the formal complaints by Syria and Israel, other U.N. documents exist which state that information on the fighting between the two nations during this time period was too conflicting for the council members to determine the precise details of the

situation, i.e., who was to blame (UN A/1873).

Even if Israel did violate the terms of the agreement by cultivating land in the demilitarized zones, under U.N. guidelines set forth in the "General Armistice Agreement between Israel and Syria, July 20, 1949," Syria did not have the right to take military action against the Israelis for their violation (Moore 1974, 407-414).

The fact that Syria used military force against civilian settlements and fishing vessels illustrates that more was at stake than the violation of an armistice demarcation line.

Israeli Retaliation: A Precursor to War

In addition to the shellings, numerous military and terrorist attacks were conducted against Israel by different groups from the surrounding Arab nations. The Israeli military at times conducted counter raids against these terrorists but only received more openly belligerent rhetoric by Arab leaders threatening the elimination of Israel. (Fisher 1990, 654, Seale 1988, 118-121)

Israel, in response to escalating military action, terrorism and political and economic oppression, such as

Egypt's blockading of the Israeli port of Eilat, added fuel to the already blazing fire of anti-Israeli sentiment when it launched a full scale attack into the Sinai, with French and British participation, on 29 October 1956, for the purpose of freeing the Suez Canal. Five months later, under U.N. and U.S. pressure, Israel withdrew her forces from the Sinai. The invasion further stirred the negative passions of Israel's neighbors, as evidenced by the increased number of terrorist attacks, many of which were carried out by al-Fatah, a militant Palestinian organization, led by Yasir Arafat, which was dedicated to recovering their homeland by using guerrilla warfare against Israel (Hourani 1991, 412; Gilbert 1984, 63-64; Sicker 1989, 92).

With a new militant government in power after the Ba'ath Party's Military Committee coup in 1966, Syria became even more openly belligerent toward the Jewish state, increasing the anti-Israeli rhetoric and following through with increased acts of military aggression (Eban 1977, 312-313; Seale 1988, 101-104).

On 14 July 1966, the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) bombed Syrian engineering equipment being used in an attempt to divert the flow of the Banias river, an upper Jordan headwater from Syria. The Israeli attack

successfully halted any further Syrian attempt to cut off this supply of water to Israel. That same day the conflict escalated as the Israelis fought an air battle with the Syrian Air Force in which Syria lost one aircraft (O'Ballance 1972, 19; Seale 1988, 120). By January 1967, the violence between Israel and Syria became so extreme that the U.N. had to intervene in order to bring a temporary cease fire to the fighting (Fisher 1990, 610).

On 7 April 1967, in response to unusually heavy artillery fire directed towards Israeli settlements, the Israeli Air Force bombed Syrian artillery positions and shot down six Syrian MIG fighters when they attempted to thwart the Israeli effort (Herzog 1982, 148). The Soviets were quick to use this event as plausible cover for the Syrians to build up their forces along the Israeli border. The Soviet Ambassador to Israel accused the Israelis of building up forces along the Syrian border; however, when asked by the Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol to personally visit the border area, he refused (Meir 1975, 353).

This constant violence, which rained down on Israel from the Golan, had become a way of life for the settlers who lived under the shadow of the Heights. In

her autobiography, Golda Meir, former Prime Minister of Israel from 1969 to 1974, gave the following description of life in the settlements prior to the 1967 war:

> The Syrians seemed bent on an escalation of the conflict; they kept up an endless bombardment of the Israeli settlements below the Golan Heights, and Israeli fisherman and farmers faced what was sometimes virtually daily attacks by snipers. I used to visit the settlements occasionally and watch the settlers go about their work as though there were nothing at all unusual in plowing with a military escort or putting children to sleep--every single night--in underground air raid shelters. (Meir 1975, 352)

The violence raged as the stage was being set for the ultimate confrontation between Syria and Israel. While Syria, along with Egypt and Jordan, began to muster and position troops around the borders of Israel in preparation for the moment which was to be "of historic importance to the Arab people", the Israelis were drawing up their own plans to meet, and defeat, their enemies (Christman 1969, 123).

CHAPTER FIVE

ISRAEL, THE GOLAN AND THE SIX-DAY WAR

> "The Six-Day War has given the people
> of Israel a sense of security...a
> strategic depth has been created. It
> has strengthened our sense of security
> and our capacity to defend Israel
> against any sudden attack by the Arab
> states."
> - Levi Eshkol, April 1, 1968

On 25 May 1967, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia mobilized their armies and moved them to Israel's borders. By late May, the entire Arab force which encircled Israel consisted of 250,000 troops, more than 2000 tanks and approximately 700 front-line fighter and bomber aircraft (Herzog 1982, 149). Anticipating an Arab attack, Israel led a preemptive strike on 5 June 1967, a date which would later be remembered in history as the beginning of the Six Day War.

Battle for the Golan

At 0745 on the first day of the war, the Israeli Air Force attacked Egypt and, in only 170 minutes, completely devastated its Air Force. Four hours later Israeli pilots carried out simultaneous attacks against Jordan, Syria, and Iraq. In about 25 minutes, the Israelis

totally demolished the entire Jordanian Air Force, severely crippled the Syrians and destroyed numerous Iraqi aircraft (Herzog 1982, 153; O'Ballance 1972, 62-72; Sachar 1989, 640). This incredible feat not only helped to ensure Israel's survival, but it proved crucial in the successful attack against and subsequent occupation of the Golan Heights. Without total control of the air environment, the strategy of overwhelming and routing the numerically superior Syrian army could not have succeeded (O'Ballance 1972, 257).

The Israelis did not concentrate on the Syrian front until 9 June, after the Egyptian and Jordanian cease fire had come into effect (Sachar 1989, 656). Once they turned North, they faced a fearsome enemy. In addition to the Maginot like fortress the Syrians built on the Golan,[2] they confronted an additional three infantry brigades, the formidable force of two armored brigades, and two mechanized brigades (Herzog 1982, 186; Seale 1988, 139)

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[2]The fortress on the Heights was manned by three infantry brigades supported by T-34 tanks, SU-100 self-propelled guns, in addition to 265 artillery pieces and 100 anti-aircraft guns. The line was ten miles deep with three lines of defense. (O'Ballance 1972, 232-233).

The Syrians, although relatively inactive on 5 June, did make an offensive thrust into Israel which defenders were able to hold with the help of the Air Force. Unable to advance any further, the Syrians shelled Israeli positions heavily from 6 June until 8 June. On 9 June, Israel concentrated its forces against Syria with the intention of cracking the Golan defenses.

The man responsible for creating the successful strategy used to penetrate the Golan was Brigadier General David (Dado) Elazar, the Head of Israel's Northern Command, a brilliant tactician who would later become IDF Chief of Staff. He utilized a five pronged attack, in hopes of confusing the Syrians as to the location of the actual assault. The main thrust was concentrating on the extreme north-west corner, in the Banias area, only 2.5 miles from the road to Kuneitra (Safran 1978, 253). Elazar chose a part of the Golan Heights that had no road, and was so extremely angular and boulder strewn that the Syrians only stationed 200 men on the ridge above (Sachar 1989, 656).

Despite constant artillery bombardment, two Israeli Brigades charged the Syrian position: the Golani Brigade, which outflanked the Syrian positions, and the

Mandler Brigade, which simultaneously commenced attacking with bulldozers, tanks and infantry. On 10 June, after 27 hours of fierce fighting, Israeli ground forces, supported by the Air Force, captured what was thought to be an "impregnable fortress." Late that afternoon, Israeli troops moved into Kuneitra without a fight and, by 1830, the Six-Day War officially ended; Israel now possessed the Golan Heights (figure 10). (Herzog 1982, 185-188; Sachar 1989, 658; Safran 1978, 256-257)

The battle for the Golan Heights was a costly one for both sides. Syria had 2,500 killed and 5,000 wounded while 10,000 soldiers and 70,000 civilians fled from the Golan. The Israelis had 117 killed and 322 wounded during the conflict (Sachar 1989, 658).

Israeli Occupation of the Golan

The Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights removed the Syrian military aggression that had plagued them for so many years and provided them with the means to prevent that aggression from occurring again.

After the Six-Day War, Israel had possession of the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem, Sinai and the Golan Heights and was immediately accused by the losers, Syria

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Mount Hermon

Majdal Shams

Banias

Mayan Barukh
Dan

Kiryat Shmona

Daphne

L E B A N O N

Kfar Szold

Zaura

Masaada

1000 metres

Amir
Shamir

Ahmediye

Reila

Lehavot Habashan

Kuneitra

Gonen

NO MANS LAND

Notera

Kafar Naffakh

Yesod Hamaala

Hulata

Khushniye

Gadot

Benot-Yaakov Bridge

Jordan

500 metres

Rosh Pina

200

Kfar Hanasi

Golan   Heights

(H) Rafid

Safed

Butmiye

Almagor

S Y R I A

I S R A E L

꙳ꞁꞁ⸜ The Golan Heights: contour lines

— · — The Israeli-Syrian cease fire from 1949 to 1967

Sea of Galilee

500 metres

Khisfin

➚ Principal lines of the Israeli advance 9 and 10 June

200 metres

(H)

▨ Area of main tank battles

Kafr-el-Ma

Ⓗ Infantry landings by helicopter

Ⓞ Israeli settlements bombarded before the battle, on 6, 7 and 8 June

Ein Gev

Fik (H)

═══ Cease fire lines established on 10 June 1967, and remaining as the Israeli-Syrian border until 6 Oct. 1973

Haon

Yarmuk River

J O R D A N

Tel Katzir

Figure 10. The Golan Heights area taken by Israel in the 1967 War. Map reprinted, with permission, from Martin Gilbert, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict. Its History in Maps* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984),69. Permission to reprint granted by Routledge Publishers London, England.

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and the other Arab nations, of having an expansionist policy. This argument has no validity and can be proved wrong by the actions of the Israelis before and during the war.

The Israeli Air Force had total air superiority and unlimited freedom of operation during this confrontation; however, it stringently abided by a self-imposed limitation of not bombing targets within 25 miles of Damascus (O'Ballance 1972, 257). Additionally, the road to Damascus, as well as Cairo and Amman, was wide open, yet, the Israeli military made no attempt to take the capital cities. Some critics say that the reason Israel did not continue to grab more territory was because of the threat of Soviet intervention; however, Yitzhak Rabin, who was IDF Chief of Staff at the time, gave a more realistic answer. In his memoirs he states that Israel did not get involved in the war to gain territory, and that the gains they did receive were already too much of a burden for three reasons: first, the newly occupied territories were triple the size of the of the state of Israel, making them difficult to defend and support logistically; second, "a million hostile Arabs" were suddenly under the jurisdiction of the Israelis, and third, negative political pressure would not allow them

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to peacefully keep what they had gained. (Rabin 1979, 118-119)

Golda Meir also counters the expansionist argument by stating that the goal of the 1967 war was the total defeat of the Arab armies in hopes of driving home the point that the State of Israel was a reality and that ultimately peace was a better option than the destruction of each other's sons. She also pointed out that to say Israel's occupation of the territories was the cause of the Arab-Israeli problem is ludicrous, because the violence existed long before 1967. (Meir 1975, 364)

The Legality of Israel's Possession of the Golan

In addition to the accusation that Israel had an expansionist agenda, the Arabs began to make accusations that Israel had illegally acquired the occupied territories. Arab leaders made it quite clear that an immediate return of all lands taken would be the only acceptable gesture from the Israelis. This attitude toward Israel was made public in the famous "three noes" resolution released on 1 September 1967, after the Arab summit meeting in Khartoum: "No negotiations with Israel, No recognition of Israel, and No peace with Israel." Ironically, Israel did make an attempt to give

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back the Golan Heights, as well as the Sinai, on 19 June 1967 after the Israeli Cabinet unanimously voted to return the land in exchange for demilitarization and peace; however, the Israelis were flatly refused by the Soviet backed Arabs.(Herzog 1982, 190-191; Lacey [1980], 17; Makovsky 1994; Sicker 1989, 115)

Contrary to Arab opinion, Israel had every right to stay in the occupied territories and dictate the terms of settlement. According to International Law, because Israel acquired these territories through self-defense she has the legal authority to remain and dictate the extent and terms of the withdrawal (Lacey [1980], 2). The late Professor Julius Stone, a world renowned expert in International Law, comments on the legality of Israel's presence in his work, *Israel and Palestine - Assault on the Law of Nations*:

> ...Israel's presence in all these areas pending negotiation of new borders is entirely lawful, since Israel entered them lawfully in self-defense. International law forbids acquisition by unlawful force, but not where, as in the case of Israel's self-defense in 1967, the entry on the territory was lawful. It does not forbid it, in particular, when the force is used to stop an aggressor, for the effect of such prohibition would be to guarantee to all potential aggressors that, even if their aggression failed, all territory lost in the attempt would be automatically returned to them. Such a rule would be absurd to the point of lunacy. There is no such rule... (Lacey [1980], 2)

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The irony of the Israeli-Syrian negotiations throughout the years is that Syria will only negotiate on *its* terms, when in fact Israel has the right to dictate the terms of negotiation as the victor and the one who has possession of the territory in question.

On 22 November 1967, the U.N. Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 242 which called for Israel's withdrawal from territories occupied during the war, termination of all claims or states of belligerency, freedom of navigation, just settlement for refugees and the guarantee of territorial inviolability and political independence for every state (Moore 1974, 1035).

Much debate has transpired over this resolution; Syria denounced it from the start, Egypt and Jordan refused to participate in peace agreements until Israel withdrew from the occupied territories, and Israel refused to withdraw unless a peace treaty was signed. (Khouri 1968, 318)

Even the words of the Resolution itself have been disputed due to the different grammatical structures in different languages; Arabs claim that Israel needs to withdraw from all *the* territories while Israelis insist that the Resolution states a withdrawal is only required from territories. This issue of wording is poignantly

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brought out in the following Israeli argument:

> It will be noted it does *not* say that Israel must withdraw from all territories, nor does it say that Israel must withdraw from *the* territories; but it *does* say that every state in the area has a right to live in peace within "secure and recognized boundaries" and it *does* specify termination of belligerency, furthermore, it does *not* speak of a Palestinian state, while it *does* speak of a refugee problem.[3] (Meir 1975, 372)

Despite the disagreements, this resolution became the primary document by which all other peace treaties and negotiations would later refer, including the present negotiations between Israel and Syria.

Even though Israel had the legal grounds to dictate the terms of settlement, an agreement between all parties did not come to fruition and the violence continued between Israel and her neighbors.

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[3]For a more in-depth discussion on the dispute over wording see Sydney Bailey, *Four Arab-Israeli Wars and the Peace Process* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1990), 275.

CHAPTER SIX

ISRAEL IN THE GOLAN

"I repeat, Madam Prime Minister, if I
were an Israeli, I would find it truly
difficult to give up the Golan
Heights."
- President Richard Nixon
speaking to Golda Meir,
The Rabin Memoirs.

The Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights
removed the Syrian threat against Israeli settlements in
the Huleh valley and Galilee, prevented a Syrian
diversion of one of Israel's primary water sources and
created a comfortable buffer zone between the two
nations. The acquisition of such a strategically
advantageous location caused Israel to hurriedly settle
the newly occupied territory in order to preclude the
possibility of withdrawal (Efrat 1988, 17).

Because the Arabs rejected the initial offer to
exchange peace for the Golan, the Israelis resolved that
they would keep the Golan until peace was achieved. In a
public statement on 27 June 1967, Prime Minister Eshkol
succinctly articulated this policy:

So long as our neighbors will persist in their policy
of belligerence and will make plans for our
destruction, we will not relinquish the areas that
are now under our control and that we deem necessary
for our security and self-defense. If, on the other

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hand, the Arab states will agree to discuss peace with us and will forego their way against us, there is no problem I hope that we will not be able to solve in direct negotiations, for the benefit of all parties. (Christman 1969, 132)

Prime Minister Eshkol's statement spoke the heart of most Israelis; however, when specifically referring to a total return of the entire Golan Heights back to Syria, the sentiment could best be described in the words of Golda Meir, "it was unlikely that the Golan Heights would be handed back, lock, stock and barrel to the Syrians" (Meir 1975, 371).

Israel, the Golan and the Yom Kippur War

The first few years immediately after the Six-Day War saw the rapid development of settlements in the Golan Heights, many of which were established by the NAHAL (No'ar Halutzi Lohem) or "Fighting Pioneer Youth." These NAHAL settlements consisted of military units which combined "security and military training with agricultural work and border settlement." (Efrat 1988, 218). In addition to providing the people to occupy and develop the newly acquired territory, the settlements had an additional role of providing a first line of defense, as they did in the War of Independence, in the event of a Syrian attack (O'Neil 1989, 444). However,

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many of these settlements were evacuated just prior to the 1973 war, thus negating the reason for their initial establishment. The reason why these settlements were evacuated is discussed in the chapter on settlements.

As the years went by, Israel's relations with her neighbors in no way improved. Terrorism, border skirmishes, military confrontations and world wide conflicts between Arabs and Jews continued. The violence culminated in yet another major military engagement between Israel and her neighbors; the October or "Yom Kippur" War.

On 6 October 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a combined attack on Israel during the holiest Jewish holiday, Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), and the holiest Muslim month of the year, Ramadan. The initial effects were devastating in the Golan. Over 1,000 Syrian tanks crossed the cease fire line, captured the Israeli surveillance fortification on Mt. Hermon, and surrounded Kuneitra (Fisher 1990, 613: Herzog 1982, 287-306).

Unbeknownst to Israel, Syria may have attacked with a limited territorial goal: liberation and occupation of the Golan Heights (Seale 1988, 196). Additionally, it was reported that a self-imposed termination of hostilities was to take place within 24-48

hours, with a cease-fire, agreed to between Syria and the Soviets, scheduled to be imposed by the U.N.[4] (Evron 1987, 184).

The Israelis, fighting for what they perceived as their very existence, sent their Air Force roaring into Syria only to encounter the Syrian's new Russian made SA-6 and SA-7, as well as older SA-2 and SA-3 surface-to-air missiles (SAMs); the results were disastrous (Allen 1982, 82). For three solid days the fighting was fierce and the Israelis lost ground in the south of the Golan and were beginning to crumble in the north.

On 9 October, after learning that 16,000 men and 200 tanks were approaching Syria from Iraq, the Israeli general staff shifted forces bound for Sinai to the Golan. Additionally, they shifted the role of the Air Force and began an air offensive against Syrian strategic targets. Despite heavy losses to the Israeli Air Force, the goal of forcing the Syrians to withdraw their SAMs from the front lines in the Golan in order to protect assets near Damascus was achieved, allowing Israeli

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[4]Assad denies such an agreement. The report may have come about due to a possible miscommunication given to the Soviets by Syrian Ambassador Nurieddin Muhieddinov (Seale 1988, 218-219).

aircraft to fly tactical air cover over the Golan. (Herzog 1982, 298; Sachar 1989, 764-765)

During the initial thrust of the war, Syria briefly regained much of the territory it lost in the Golan during the 1967 war and came within minutes of occupying Israeli territory, an achievement which posed a serious threat to the north of Israel (Herzog 1982, 287-288). Nevertheless, due to the fierce determination of the Israelis and the advantage the terrain provided for the outnumbered defenders, the tides began to turn. By 10 October, the Israelis not only were able to hold their positions, but managed to to conduct a counter offensive in which they gained more land than what was taken during the Six Day War (figure 11). When the cease-fire went into affect, the Israelis were within 25 miles of Damascus. (Fisher 1990, 613).

The cease-fire, which was brought on with intervention by the U.S. and the Soviet Union, was forced under direction of the U.N. Security Council on 23 October 1973 (Safran 1978, 491-492). The Council issued Resolution 338 which not only called for an immediate cease-fire, but called upon the parties to implement the 1967 Resolution 242 (Moore 1974, 1138).

Seven months later, in May 1974, Israel and Syria

Figure 11. Territory in the Golan taken by Israel in 1973. Map reprinted, by permission, from Martin Gilbert, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict. Its History in Maps* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), 94. Permission to reprint granted by Routledge Publishers London, England.

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agreed to limited disengagement by the establishment of a U.N. neutral zone on the Golan Heights (figure 12). The terms included Israel's forfeiture of the area taken during the 1973 war and the return of the town of Kunietra. Some Israelis felt that Israel should have kept Kunietra and that by giving in to Syrian demands the nation was embarking on a road of further compromise. This sentiment was expressed by religious zealots in 1974 in the following statement: "giving up Kuneitra would lead us down a slope, at the bottom of which we would be abandoning the Western Wall." (Eban 1977, 563)

The Israelis did return Kuneitra and a U.N. force was stationed in the neutral zone. The U.N. force, originally scheduled to remain for six months after more permanent settlements were made, was renewed by the U.N. and has continued indefinitely (Fisher 1990, 613; Moore 1974, 1193-1196). When the dust finally settled, Israel was still in possession of the Golan Heights.

Regardless of the agreement, President Assad continued to contend that Israel must return all of the Golan that was taken in 1967 before any further negotiations could take place (Pipes 1991a, 40). Commenting on Assad's peculiar attitude in calling for an Israeli withdrawal with no offer for peace, Abba Eban,
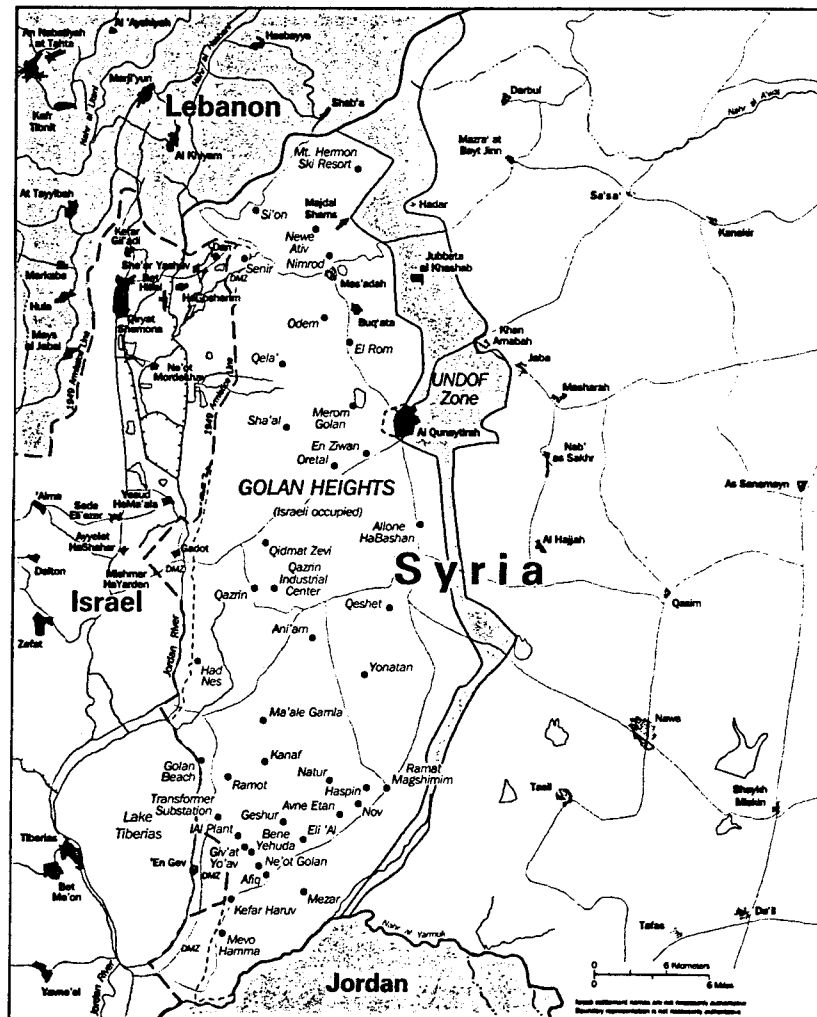
Figure 12. The post-1973 War U.N. Neutral Zone. Map from
U.S. Department of Commerce (Springfield, VA: National
Technical Information Service, 1992).

former Israeli Foreign Minister, stated: "He seemed to be talking like a victor laying down a dictated peace rather than as head of a state which had suffered a military defeat." (Eban 1977, 563)

The Golan Heights: 1973 to Present

After the 1974 disengagement agreement, the area along the Israeli-Syrian border in the Golan remained relatively quiet and attracted little international attention until December 1981 when Israel passed a law applying "Israeli law, jurisdiction and administration" to the Golan Heights (Sachar 1987, 149). There was a good deal of support for this policy as shown by a petition which was created two years earlier. Following Camp David and the return of Sinai to Egypt, the petition against future Israeli withdrawal from the Golan was started by occupants of the region, and more than 750,000 signatures were collected including those of 70 Knesset members. Subsequently, in March 1981 the right-wing Likud party attempted to pass a bill to extend Israeli sovereignty over the region, but it was defeated (Sachar 1987, 149).

On 14 December 1981, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin pushed through the Golan Law bill citing

the following reasons as justification: possession of the Heights by Israel in ancient times,[5] past Syrian terrorism and aggression, Israel's conquest of the area, Syria's "belligerent and hostile" attitude toward negotiations and their continued refusal to accept U.N. Resolution 242 which renounced force; the Bill passed 83 to 21 (Sachar 1987, 150).

The Golan Law was also viewed by the Syrians, and many others, as a violation of U.N. Resolution 242 which required Arab recognition of Israel in return for Israel's withdrawal from occupied territories; therefore, Syria perceived Israel's action as a renunciation of Resolution 242. (Collelo 1988, 220-1). Begin's action brought about many additional negative reactions: it thrust the Golan issue back into the limelight, gave the Arabs, and other enemies of Israel, a valuable propaganda weapon, caused the Druze population in the Golan to be turned against the government and provoked militant Palestinians (Sachar 1987, 151).

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[4]Referring to Israel's possession of the Golan Heights during ancient times, as a justification to retain the area in modern times, was used by other officials as well. In 1967, Yigal Allon, Minister of Labor, used the same argument. (Haddad 1992).

Finally, it caused the Syrian government to make reconquest of the Golan Heights a national priority (Collelo 1988, 217). In affirmation of this goal, Syrian President Assad, in a speech to the People's Council in February 1986 stated that, "Syria would work to put the Golan Heights in the middle of Syria and not on its borders" (Collelo 1988, 222; Pipes 1991a, 41).

Although no military confrontations have taken place in the Golan Heights since the Yom Kippur War, the two nations continued to have conflicts. The most recent military encounter took place in 1982 when Syria tangled with Israeli forces engaged in "Operation Peace for Galilee", a military effort aimed at stopping PLO terrorist activities based out of Lebanon. During the fighting which took place from 6 June to 21 August, both nations suffered heavy casualties; however, Syria suffered severe losses in military equipment losing over 350 tanks and eighty-six combat aircraft while Israel lost approximately thirty to forty tanks and one aircraft (Herzog 1982, 353). Because of this strained relationship, by the mid to late eighties an agreement over the Golan didn't appear possible.

Israel and Syria: 1994

Today dialogue between Israel and Syria has increased greatly and is now at the point where the possibility of a settlement is closer than in any other time in Israel's modern history. It is this environment which has caused the present Israeli administration to talk about the eventuality of a withdrawal from the Golan. It appears that such a compromise would indeed thrust Israel onto the brink of another historical event; peace with Syria.

In light of these recent developments, the question to ask is whether or not forfeiture of the Golan Heights is worth the promise of peace. The next part of this study attempts to show that the Golan is too geostrategically important for Israel to use as an expendable bargaining chip for regional peace.

PART II

THE GEOSTRATEGIC IMPORTANCE
OF THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE GOLAN DEFENSE AND MODERN WARFARE

"If one should be the first to occupy
a position in level ground, how much
more does this apply to difficult and
dangerous places! How can such terrain
be given to the enemy?"
    -Chang Yü, *Sun Tsu, The Art of War*

Despite the fact that modern warfare is different
than warfare of the past, three factors still remain
valid in military thought today: war is a "human
enterprise", modern weaponry must be "assimilated into
tactics" and "the combatant who has control of higher
ground holds a decided advantage over his opponent" (Air
Force Manual 1-1 1992, 17, 36, 63) These very factors
make the issue of possession of the Golan Heights a valid
argument in the ongoing peace negotiations between Syria
and Israel.

Ground Warfare and the Golan Heights

The nation which occupies the Golan Heights has
two very important military advantages: possession of
a natural defensive barrier and strategic depth. Modern
armies still engage in ground warfare, as illustrated in
the Gulf War, Yugoslavia and Rawanda, and the occupation

of "ground" is still a primary military objective. The Israeli military also realizes the importance of terrain in today's high-tech warfare and emphasizes its importance in the following statement:

> The modern technological and electronic weapons permit strikes against distant targets. But the prime obstacle remains the line of sight target; terrain, therefore, has no substitute when it comes to observation and fire control" (Israel Defence Forces Spokesman, 1981).

In an analysis of possible future armed conflict between Syrians and Israelis in the Golan, one study gives the following description of the role of ground forces:

> Only if the ground forces are able to seize and hold militarily critical terrain will it be possible to inflict a military defeat on its opponents. Thus, despite the importance of the air battle, it is the results on the ground that will ultimately determine the outcome." (Goodman 1990, 65)

These ground forces, in addition to making "high ground" an offensive objective, utilize terrain as a natural defensive barrier to slow, or stop, an enemy's advance as well as provide defense for ground forces during combat. As an additional part of their defensive strategy, armies prefer to fight under conditions which allow the defenders time to absorb an oncoming attack, marshal reserve troops, or to fall back and regroup if the battlefield situation becomes unfavorable. The term used

to describe this "marshaling" or "fall-back" area is "strategic depth."

These two characteristics, a natural defensive barrier and strategic depth, make the Golan Heights of vital geostrategic importance for Israel's military establishment and overall national security.

The Golan and the Five Key Elements of Modern Land Warfare

The terrain of the battlefield makes up the natural structure of the ground warfare environment, and the possession of ground, especially high ground, is still a military advantage for combatants in today's modern high-tech environment. The possession of an area like the Golan Heights, combined with air superiority, provides an outstanding defensive line of position. Although no area is completely invulnerable, the Golan Heights provide many positive advantages in the five key elements involved in modern land warfare: Observation and fields of fire, cover and concealment, obstacles and movement, key terrain and avenues of approach (figure 13). (U.S. Army FM 100-5, 77)

In regards to observation and fields of fire, mountainous terrain usually favors the defender by

TERRAIN ANALYSIS

"... analyze potential for cover and concealment, for movement and obstacle effect, and for observation and direct fire effect."

OBSTACLES

COVER

COVER AND CONCEALMENT

CONCEALMENT

OBSERVATION
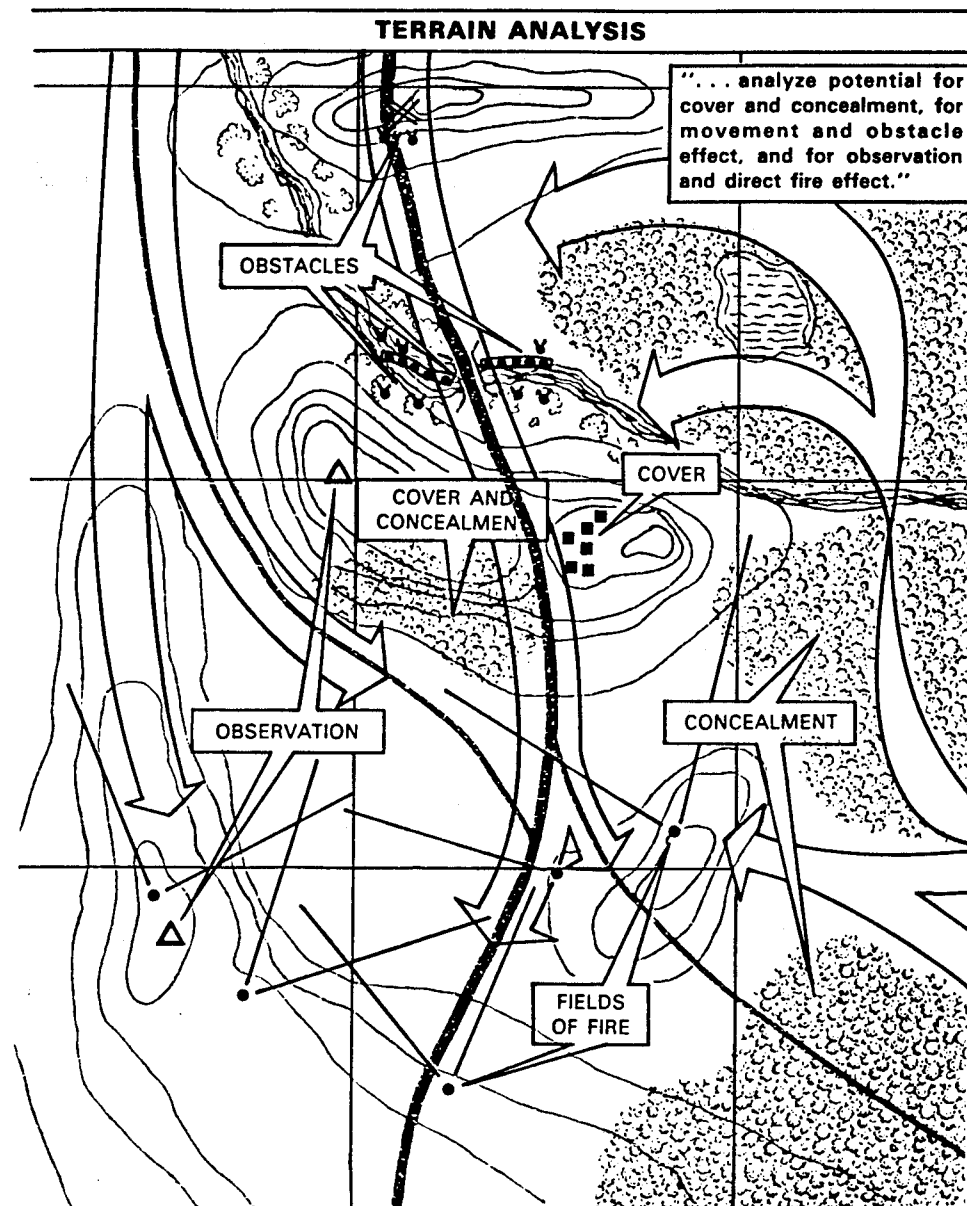
FIELDS OF FIRE

Figure 13. Three of the five key elements of modern land warfare: 1. Observation and fields of fire, 2. Cover and concealment and 3. Obstacles and movement. From U.S. Army Field Manual 100-5. *Operations* (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1986), 79.

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providing very effective long-range artillery and aerial fires because of the elevation and excellent observation. The Syrians realized the strategic importance of this area and, over the years, capitalized on the excellent field of fire over the Huleh valley by creating a massive fortified defense system. This system, up to 10 miles in depth, was located along the western edge of the Golan Heights and provided Syria with an excellent defensive position to thwart any aggression which may have come from Israel. One observer gave the following description of how the Syrians utilized the terrain in building their defenses on the Golan:

> It consisted of mutually supporting gun emplacements and bunkers, with underground living quarters, adjacent stores, and connecting trenches. There were at least three main lines of defence, but in places they were in terraced formation to fit in with the contours of the escarpment. Good use had been made of the basic rocky terrain, supplemented where necessary with concrete. The main artillery positions were to the rear of the forward defense lines, overlooking and able to support any of them, and placed to allow the guns to lift their fire to fall on Israeli settlements in the valley below. (O'Ballance 1972, 232-233)

Had Syria chosen to utilize the Golan as a purely defensive system instead of a base for aggressive offensive attacks, much of the conflict which took place between these two nations may very well have been avoided. However, Syria did choose to use their Golan

defenses offensively against Israel in retaliation for what they perceived to be Israeli violations of the 1949 armistice agreement. The Syrian artillery emplacements on the Golan had a range of up to 20 miles and could reach well west of the Sea of Galilee (figure 14); however, the shelling of Israeli territory, which began in 1948 and culminated with the most intense activity taking place between 1966 and 1967 prior to the war, happened within a 10 mile radius of the Syrian positions (Gilbert 1984, 63-64). Syrian missiles launched from the Golan Heights could easily reach the Israeli Mediterranean coast, hitting such cities as Hadera, 30 miles north of Tel Aviv (Gilbert 1984, 52). The Syrian activity between 1948 and 1967 clearly demonstrated that the Golan was an advantageous position providing the Syrians with excellent observation of Israeli towns, villages and farming or fishing activities and allowing them a "clear shot" on Israeli targets.

Once the Israelis occupied the Heights, they quickly became aware of just how valuable this terrain was for observation and fields of fire. As one report stated:

> Militarily, the Golan Heights are important both strategically and tactically. Command of the high ground--the Hermon peak and the row of extinct

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NORTHERN ISRAEL AND THE GOLAN HEIGHTS 1949-1967

Legend:

—·— The borders of Israel from 1949 to 1967

ᕲᕲᕲ The Golan Heights: contour lines

░░░ Area within two miles of the Syrian border.

◉ Israeli settlements within two miles of the Syrian border

Syrian artillery range (ten miles)

• Israeli towns and settlements within Syrian artillery range of only 10 miles (Not all settlements are shown)

Figure 14. The range of Syrian artillery from the Golan. Map reprinted, by permission, from Martin Gilbert, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict. Its History in Maps* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson,1984), 56. Permission to reprint granted by Routledge Publishers London, England.

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volcanoes extending in a north-south line--is a vital component of Israel's early warning system. From this high ground, watchful eyes can maintain an awareness of any dramatic and threatening change in Lebanon to the north and Syria to the east...Location of IDF forces on the volcanic peaks gives them a double-edged weapon: First, observation control for the maintenance of early warning; secondly, a firm foothold and a base for fire control against an enemy attempting surprise. Not only is this advantage in IDF hands, but the very fact of IDF presence makes it difficult for the Syrians to obtain intelligence and to control their fire against targets to the west. (Israeli Defence Forces Spokesman, 1981)

In addition to observation and fields of fire, the Golan Heights also provide its possessor with good cover and concealment. Cover, which is protection from observation and fire from the enemy, and concealment, which is protection from enemy observation alone, are essential elements for successful deployment of ground forces. In the abrupt escarpments of the Golan, stream courses have cut many deep ravines and separated small portions of the plateau from each other, forming excellent areas for cover and concealment (Orni 1971, 1531). These, combined with mountain slopes and depressions, are important for preserving force strength; protecting command posts, close combat units and support units; and for providing limited ground protection in nuclear-chemical environments (U.S. Army FM 100-5, 77-78).

The excellent cover provided by the Golan's terrain was illustrated in the 1967 war when, despite repeated attacks with bombs, napalm and strafing by the Israeli Air Force, the Syrian army, with no close air support from the Syrian Air Force, stubbornly remained in their positions and were removed only by hand to hand combat and the threat of being outflanked by Israeli ground forces (Herzog 1982, 186-7; Seale 1988, 140).

In the 1973 war the terrain provided cover and concealment for the greatly outnumbered Israeli defenders and allowed them to "dig in" and delay the enemy advances for almost four days; long enough for reserve force reinforcements to arrive (Herzog 1982, 288-9; Asher 1987, 87)

An additional tactical advantage, which utilizes concealment, is the ability for defending forces to use terrain in order to deceive the enemy in regards to troop strength and disposition. This capability enables the defender to draw enemy forces into well prepared defenses (U.S. Army FM 100-5, 78, 82).

A classic example of utilizing terrain to conceal forces was Captain Meir "Tiger" Zamir's ambush during the 1973 war. His nine tanks, hidden by terrain and darkness, ambushed a Syrian tank column destroying nearly 25 tanks

with no loses to his own company (Asher 1987, 138).

The three remaining areas that possession of the Golan Heights provide advantages for are: obstacles and movement; key terrain, i.e. terrain which gives a marked advantage to the combatant who holds it; and avenues of approach.

Obstacles hinder ground movement and in mountainous or rough areas like the Golan, the terrain makes movement extremely difficult. Areas with large cliffs, precipices or extinct volcanoes slow down combat forces by restricting their avenues of approach, either by limiting the number of troops allowed to move or by limiting the direction they can travel in, as well as by forcing them to abandon their terrain-limited vehicles and travel solely on foot. An additional obstacle, created by hills and mountains, is the restriction of lines of communications (LOC) like roads, railroads and rivers. The terrain causes the LOC to run in valleys or other unhindered areas thereby forcing major engagements to occur in vulnerable areas like entries and exits of passes (U.S. Army FM 100-5, 82). This concept of obstacle to movement was unforgettably demonstrated both by the fierce and bloody 27 hour battle which the Israelis endured prior to capturing the Golan in 1967, and the

incredible stand-off the vastly out numbered Israeli tank crews made with the Syrian aggressors in 1973.

The Heights provide many excellent natural obstacles to opposing forces trying to penetrate the area. The best access to the Golan Plateau is from the direction of Damascus in the north-east; all other approaches are much more difficult.

Only five other main roads traverse the plateau from Israel: the northern road from Kibbutz Dan which crosses through Banias, Massada and on to Damascus; a road from Gonen to Wasset; the central main route from Israel to Damascus via the Benot Ya'acov Bridge and Kuneitra; a road from the Arik bridge at the North end of the Sea of Galilee to Hushniya, and a southern route which runs north-eastwards through Fik, El Al and on to Boutmiya (figure 15) (Herzog 1982, 285). All of these routes fall into the category of restricted lines of communication as mentioned above.

All other routes to the plateau, including supply roads and foot paths, are extremely difficult for combat forces to utilize. This was illustrated by the slow progress made by Israeli paratroopers along roads designated "The Serpentine" and "The Crevice" during the 1973 war (Asher 1987, 267-8).

The Hermon

Dan

Hermonit

107

Booster

Gonen

Kuneitra

Vasit

Tel Abu Nida

Naffach

Bnot Yakov Bridge

111

Hushniya

113

Tel Faris

114

115

Arik Bridge

Tel Juhadar

116

Tel Saki

Ramat Magshamim

El Al
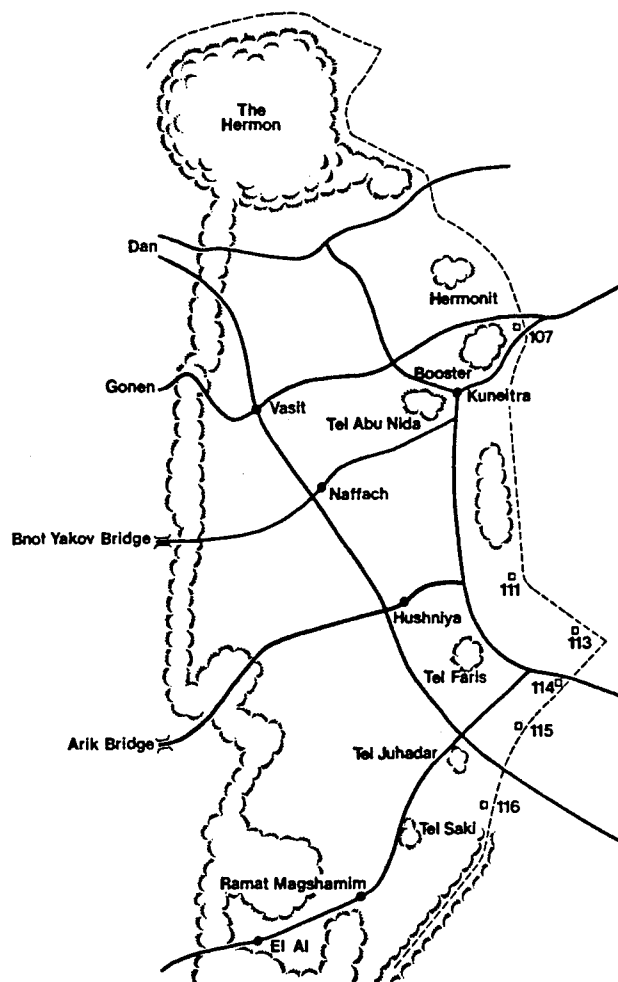
Figure 15. Main roads in the Golan. Map from Jerry Asher, *Duel for the Golan. The 100-Hour Battle that Saved Israel.* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1987), map 2.

In the north, the Mount Hermon massif (9,232 feet above sea level) formidably blocks the approach to the plateau. In the south, the deep ravines of the rivers Rakkad and Yarmuk make it difficult for vehicles to cross into the area. Finally, the mountain escarpment, overlooking the Huleh and Upper Jordan River valley, consists of giant walls of seemingly impenetrable cliffs ranging from 2,000 feet near Tel Azzaziat in the north, to the steepest area of 1,400 feet above the shore of the Sea of Galilee in the south. (O'Ballance 1972, 230-232)

In 1973, the restricted avenues of approach the Syrians had to deal with gave the Israeli defenders a great advantage. This is illustrated by the battle between the Israeli defenders in the northern section of Golan and the Syrian 3rd armor division. The Syrian push in the north came via Sassa to Jubbata el Khahab through the "Valley of Tears," and, because the Syrians were forced to go through this one area, the small Israeli force was able to hold them at bay long enough for reinforcements to arrive. However, in the south, the Syrian army did fare better against the Israelis as they had more avenues of approach and were almost able to reach vital supply lines which would have totally cut off the

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northern defenders (figure 16) (Langfan 1992a).

The advantage of terrain is further described in the following lesson learned by the Israeli army:

> The experience of the Yom Kippur War teaches that a force in position on the Hermonit could (despite its inferiority of numbers) prevent a Syrian breakthrough and turn the wedge into a field of destruction. Without detracting from the heroism of the troops, the topographical facts and superiority of terrain permitted expression of the qualitative advantage of the Israeli soldier. (Israel Defence Forces Spokesman, 1981)

One additional edge provided by terrain in areas like the Golan Heights is the ability of the defender to develop trails laterally along ridge lines allowing him to move his forces faster than the attacker (U.S. Army FM 100-5, 82). Indeed, during the Six-Day War Syrian soldiers could quickly move about in trenches while Israeli soldiers made slow progress ascending the heights.

The Concept of Strategic Depth

The Golan Heights are vitally important for Israel's National Defense because they provides valuable strategic depth; a scarce commodity in such a small country. Strategic depth is a geographic "buffer zone" which provides three important military advantages: a cushion for the initial blow of an attack, room

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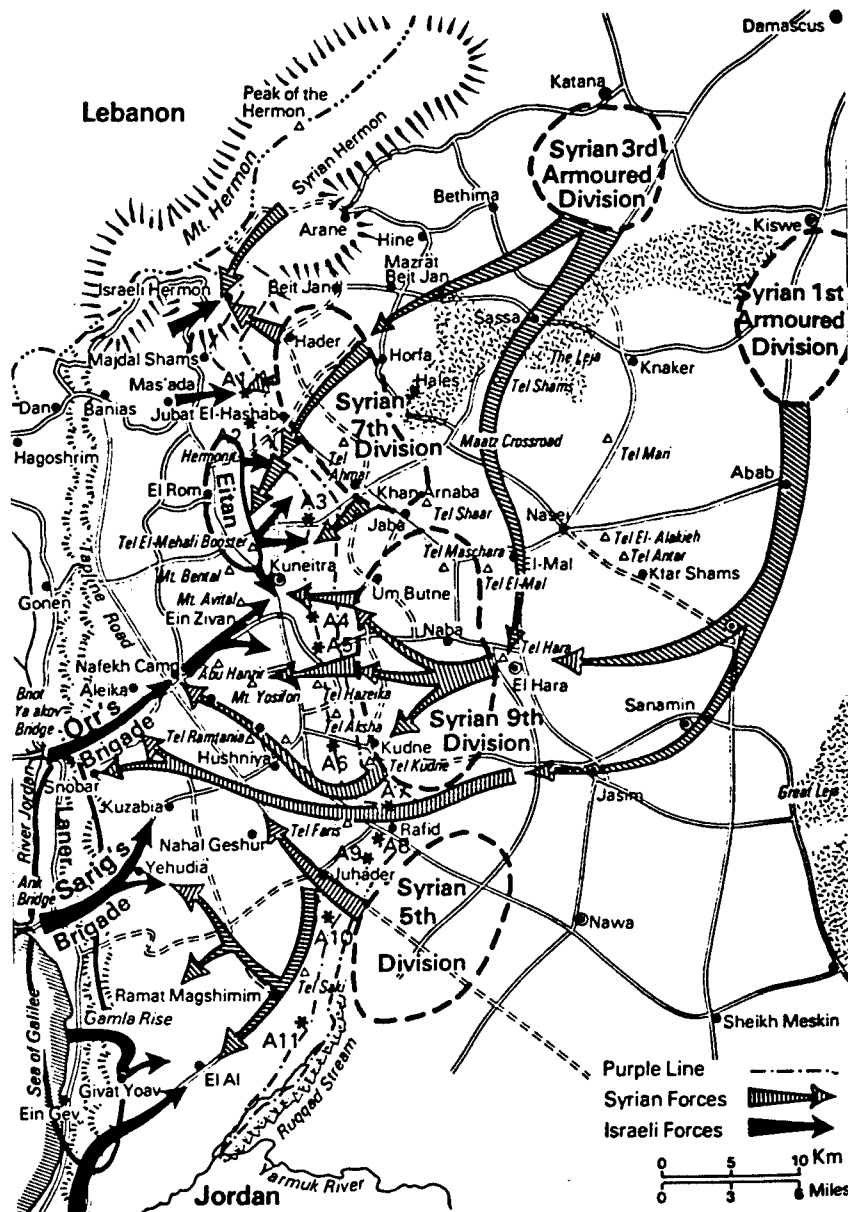
Figure 16. Syrian attack points during the Yom Kippur War
with emphasis on the deep penetration of Syrian forces in
the south. Map from Chaim Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars.
War and Peace in the Middle East*. (New York: Random House,
1982), p. 290

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for reinforcements to marshal prior to joining a battle, and an area for combatants to fall back into and reorganize when the enemy forces begin to overwhelm them. Brigadier General Israel Tal, who was head of the armored corps, explained the importance of strategic depth to his commanders prior to the 1967 war:

> Other people, other armies can even afford to lose a second and third battle. They have strategic depth for retreat, recuperation, reorganization and can initiate a new counter-offensive -- we cannot. We cannot afford to fail in the first battle. Remember: the side that would win the first battle would not only decide the attaining of a physical objective, but should above all decide the attainment of a moral and psychological objective. The side that would win the first test would move over to the offensive, and the failing side would move to a retreat. We have nowhere to retreat. Therefore, the first battle would be a test whose results would decisively influence the whole fate of the war, and therefore, the fate of the state... (Handel 1973, 40-41)

The concept of strategic depth is a vital one for Israel, and its importance for Israel's national security will be further developed in the next chapter.

After a little examining, it becomes quite clear that the Golan is truly "decisive" territory, i.e., it has extraordinary impact on the mission of defending Israel (U.S. Army FM 100-5, 80). If this is true, then a Golan withdrawal will most likely not increase the probability of peace, but will certainly weaken Israel's

capability to defend itself should there be another conflict with Syria.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE GOLAN AND ISRAEL'S DEFENSE STRATEGY

> "Currently, we must hold the entire
> Golan. Even in times of peace, the IDF
> should remain on the Golan Heights.
> - Comment made by Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak,
> IDF Chief of Staff, September 1994

Prior to 1967 Israel had no strategic depth and had to resort to a two-fold tactic for defense: the formation of a Spatial Defense System and an "offensive" defense strategy known as "Casus Belli."

After 1967, Israel's strategy changed due to the acquisition of the territories. This change integrated the geostrategic advantage of the newly acquired Golan Heights, especially strategic depth, with the older defense strategies of Spatial Defense and Casus Belli, providing Israel with an excellent defensive posture that had a significant impact on the outcome of the 1973 war.

Israel's Defense Strategy Prior to 1967

The first defense strategy, used during the war of independence, called for the formation of settlements along the state's boundaries, among which existed the previously mentioned NAHAL settlements. The NAHAL, were

elements of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and consisted of armed and trained volunteers, usually within the paratroop corps, who combined communal agricultural settlement, or Kibbutz, duties with responsibilities as part of the Spatial Defense System or HAGMAR. The primary responsibility of the NAHAL was defense of the settlements. Additionally, the other settlements (Kibbutz, Moshav, Moshava and Development Towns) were incorporated into the HAGMAR and given an identity as a "military unit" in part of a specific region. (O'Neil 1989, 444; Yaniv 1987, 34-35) It was this system of operation, a civilian military combination, which was successfully used in the Israeli War of Independence and which became the foundation of the modern Israeli Defense Force (Herzog 1982, 106-107)

The second part of the pre-1967 defense strategy was "Casus Belli," or "occasion of war." This "offensive" defense strategy justified a preemptive action against a nation that displayed the intentions of waging war, e.g., a build up of troops along a border or active attempts to disrupt vital resources like water. It was this strategy that Israel successfully used against the Arab armies massed around its borders in 1967 (Handel 1973, 47-48; Yaniv 1987, 150).

In 1973, the preemptive strategy was not used which resulted in near disaster for Israel. The IDF Chief of Staff, General David (Dado) Elazar, did propose a first-strike strategy against Syria based on intelligence reports and the position and number of Egyptian and Syrian troops mobilized against Israel's borders, i.e., casus belli. However, he was overruled by Prime Minister Golda Meir who, "with a heavy heart," agreed with the Defense Minister, General Moshe Dayan, that the intelligence reports were not conclusive and that a first strike would "result in unacceptable international political repercussions." (Asher 1987, 69-73; Herzog 1982, 230; Meir 1975, 427; Sicker 1989, 134-5)

After the 1967 war, Israel's borders were significantly extended with the acquisition of the Sinai, West Bank and the Golan Heights. A large amount of strategic depth was added to Israel, especially in the south where the Sinai desert separated Israel from Egypt.

In the north, Israel's situation had drastically changed. Not only did the occupation of the Golan Heights provide Israel with a defensive buffer zone, but it also ended Syria's ability to shell Israeli settlements. Additionally, it reversed Israel's military situation by putting the Syrians in a defensive position as Israeli

artillery and armor, now occupying territory some 30 miles from Damascus, threatened the Syrian capital (Herzog 1982, 195).

Israeli Defenses on the Golan Heights

Israel's defenses on the Golan Heights were built to provide the nation with a secure border that would deter any further aggression from its hostile neighbor in the north. However, this did not stop Arab aggression as demonstrated by the Yom Kippur War in 1973.

Immediately prior to the 1973 war, the Israeli position was described as an obstacle "only slightly less daunting" than the Bar-Lev line, a massive defensive fortification along the Egyptian-Israeli border, i.e., the Suez Canal, built by General Chaim Bar-Lev, IDF Chief of Staff in 1968 (Herzog 1982, 131, 202). In his unofficial biography of Assad, Patrick Seale gives the following description of the Israeli defenses on the Golan that the Syrian aggressors had to overcome:

> Along the entire length of the so-called purple line - the 1967 cease-fire line - Israel had dug an anti-tank ditch four meters deep and four to six meters wide, flanked by a high earth embankment and protected by mine fields on all sides. Electronic devices, monitored from an observation post 2,000 meters up on mount Hermon, kept these defenses under permanent surveillance. Behind the tank trap was a network of 112 fortified blockhouses, and behind

these the tanks, artillery batteries and infantry of the Golan garrisons." (Seale 1988, 203-4)

Despite these defenses, the Israelis were no match for the 6 October surprise attack launched by the 60,000 man Syrian army which was supported by approximately 1,500 tanks, 1000 artillery pieces, combat aircraft and SAMs. The Israeli defenses, which had a total of 170 tanks, crumbled and were pushed to the very edge of the Golan Heights; the defenders sustained devastating loses before reinforcements could arrive the next day. After 24 hours of fighting, the Syrian forces were within 10 minutes tank drive of the Jordan river and the Sea of Galilee. (Herzog 1982, 285-288)

Because Israel chose not to implement the first-strike strategy, she relied on strategic depth as a first line of defense against possible Arab attack (Sicker 1989, 135). If Israel did not have strategic depth when the Syrian army broke through their defensive positions, the advancing troops could have easily pushed into Israel's interior. One political scientist, commenting on Israel's control of the Golan, noted that:

> ...there was a consensus in Israel, after the 1973 war, that without such control Syria would have overrun much of the Galilee, whereas, because of Israel's control there, the conflict was contained entirely within the heights." (Sicker 1989, 159)

The 1973 war was a vivid illustration of the importance of strategic depth and its use by ground forces. Israeli military leaders were also in agreement that possession of the Golan Heights saved Israel from a virtually catastrophic situation. Commenting on the graveness of the potential danger, one account described it as follows:

> During the 1973 war...had the mass of Syrian armour and their arsenal of weapons stood initially on the western edge of the heights, not even the most heroic stand of front-line units would have been able to prevent heavy damage to the Israeli heartland, and very possibly serious incursions. (Israel Defence Forces Spokesman, 1981)

The fact that strategic depth was a crucial factor in Israel's victory, especially with the absence of casus belli, weakens the argument that the loss of the Golan Heights will not threaten Israel's national security and, therefore, they should return land for peace. The role which the Golan Heights played during the Yom Kippur War is deeply ingrained in the minds of many Israelis (Sicker 1989, 186-7; Pipes 1991a, 37).

Another major point which needs to be understood is the fact that there has been no major military confrontation between Israel and Syria in the Golan since the 1974 disengagement accord. Contrary to the belief of some, this is not so much proof that Assad can keep a

treaty as much as it is further evidence which reinforces the idea that strategic depth is a military reality that contributes to Israel's security (Pipes 1991a, 37).

Israeli Defense Strategy Today

As stated earlier, Israel's defense strategy immediately after the war of independence and up to 1973 was a preemptive strike utilizing casus belli. Today, Israel's defense philosophy is "deterrence", with the main goal of the IDF not to win a war, but to prevent one from occurring (Goodman 1990, 50). However, upon close examination this strategy is not far removed from the way the Israelis operated in the past, as cited in the following highlights of a Rand Corporation study in 1981:

> The guiding maxim will remain "a defensive strategy, executed offensively" to compensate for Israel's lack of strategic depth and its inability to retreat from the country's borders. The idea that most of the fighting must take place on enemy territory is a fundamental part of Israeli military thinking... (Goodman 1990, 51)

Two examples of this strategy in action are the Israeli Air Forces's (IAF) destruction of the nuclear reactor in Osiraq, Iraq, and the war in Lebanon, the beginning of which has been described as "a replay of the Six-Day War" (Yaniv 1987, 190). The Osiraq bombing was a preemptive attack

in order to eliminate Iraq's nuclear weapons production capability, a development which Israel perceived as a threat to national security (Hersh 1991, 10; Nordeen 1990, 166-167). Likewise, "Operation Peace for Galilee" was another military effort, conducted outside of Israel, which aimed at destroying the PLO terrorist infrastructure based in Lebanon and forcing the Syrian military presence to retreat back to the Syrian-Lebanon border.(Herzog 1982, 344-345;)

Inherent in this doctrine of deterrence is the idea that any attack by Syria initiated against Israel, even a limited conflict, will be considered an act of war and that "Israel, not Syria, will dictate the limits of that war" (Goodman 1990, 180).

Preemption is still a major factor in Israel's strategy today; however, the emphasis has changed from a preemptive ground offensive to a preemptive air offensive, with the goal of removing Syria's surface-to-surface missiles (SCUDs) and SAM threats (Goodman 1990, 181). The philosophy behind such a strategy is that once the SCUDs and SAMs are suppressed, then the ground forces have an advantage over an attacking enemy in terms of holding and taking "ground."

The Golan Heights, in their present condition under Israel's control, play a significant role in this deterrence strategy. As described by one observer:

At present, Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights is in itself a deterrent to a unilateral Syrian military initiative. From the Golan Heights, Israel is in a position to respond to Syrian adventurism by threatening a major ground assault on Damascus. (Sicker 1989, 187)

Ground Warfare and Modern Weaponry

One further area of Israeli defense strategy that needs to be mentioned is the relationship between ground forces and modern weapons systems. It is not the purpose of this study to give an in-depth examination of defense economics, but it is important to understand that high costs for modern weaponry make it extremely difficult for Israel to rely solely on technology. The large sums of money required to build, maintain, operate, import and support the most modern high-tech equipment limits the number of items that can be acquired and their subsequent use in the battlefield (Goodman 1990, 102; O'Neil 1989, 466). This means that conventional troops will continue to utilize traditional methods of fighting, i.e., taking ground, in addition to using modern resources such as laser guided smart bombs, cruise missiles, or advanced technology fighters.

Associated with this economic reality is the aspect of troop strength. If the Golan Heights are

returned to Syria, or even if a partial withdrawal is carried out in which Israel is west of the Golan ridge line, then the Israelis would be forced into some very expensive alternatives. The IDF would need to provide security for the state over a much larger border and, therefore, would have to either utilize a larger active duty force, increase tours of duty for civilian reserves, or rely on a much faster mobilization threshold in order to fulfill its mission (Langfan 1992a). Any one of these three options would require large amounts of money to implement, a requirement which would only put a further burden on Israel's already strained economy.

The present economic situation in Israel cannot support such an increase in military spending. From 1986 to 1995, the defense department's portion of the overall state budget declined from twenty four percent to eighteen percent, compared to the nearly forty percent increase in the social services budget in the 1992 to 1995 period alone (Pinkas 1994, 14). In addition to maintaining the existing capabilities of the armed forces, it would be very difficult to support the additional active duty troops and associated support needed if the Golan is returned to Syria. Presently, Israel is struggling with an inflation rate approaching

fifteen percent a year, a prime interest rate at seventeen percent, after the seventh increase in ten months; housing costs which have risen twenty eight percent in the last year, the diversion of government funds to support the nearly bankrupt health insurance fund, and the continuing arrival of tens of thousands of Russian immigrants (Parks 1994, 2). The economic factors involved with a withdrawal from the Golan is a massive problem which proponents of cannot ignore.

Another area which affects a modern army's utilization of sophisticated weaponry is battlefield deployment. One example of this is the strategy planned by the IAF for use in future wars. The two primary missions of the IAF in the opening stages of a future war are air defense of the homeland and suppression of SAM's and surface-to-surface missiles. This strategy gives limited close air support for ground troops during the initial phase of a war; thus, the infantry will not always have immediate access to the modern weapons systems of the IAF (Goodman 1990, 64).

A more recent example of the detrimental affect of heavy reliance on modern weaponry can be seen in the war in Lebanon. Despite the outstanding performance of the IAF, the difficult terrain in southern Lebanon proved to

be a drawback for the ground forces. The lack of infantry support for the more modern battlefield entities, like armor and mechanized units, was cited as a major problem in that war (O'Neil 1989, 456).

The reason nations have defense strategies is to be prepared in the event of hostile aggression from another nation capable of making war against them. Despite the recent collapse of the Soviet Union, the distancing of Moscow from Damascus and the ongoing peace initiatives in the region, Syria still maintains a formidable fighting machine and has the capability to carry out military operations of its own, a reality which Israel should never forget.

Syrian Military Strategy

Despite the present talks between Syria and Israel, Syria's own military doctrine is a cause for Israel to tread cautiously. The Syrian strategy is to use surprise, with a shattering first strike, followed by rapid penetration of enemy territory to predetermined areas with the overall objective of "holding ground" long enough for superpower intervention. The goal of this strategy is to "create a new geostrategic reality." (Goodman 1990, 18) A quick first-strike, with the

objective of regaining the Golan Heights, has been seen by some analysts as a real possibility as well as the impetus for Assad's past policy of "strategic parity" with Israel (Sicker 1989, 187; Pipes 1991a, 45).

Although a Syrian surprise attack in the Golan is not very likely *today*, Israeli military leaders can not ignore past threats by Syria to forcibly take back their land in order to recreate "Greater Syria," nor can they ignore the fact that Syria has maintained a formidable army. As late as 1991, Syria devoted 30 percent of its GNP, and 55-60 percent of the government budget, to a military establishment that maintained an army of over 400,000 troops, equipped with highly advanced weapons systems, deployed along some of the strongest border fortifications in the world (figure 17)(Pipes 1991a, 44). Despite the loss of Soviet support, Syria's standing army divisions outnumber Israel's four to one, and in the Golan, including Syrian troops in Lebanon, as much as twelve to one (Mideast Mirror 1994).

In addition to its existing capability, Syria continues to import weapons and technology from such nations as North Korea, China , Czechoslovakia and Russia (Kristof 1991; Lawson 1994, 58; Pipes 1991a, 44; Tyler 1992).

THE MILITARY BALANCE
IN THE MIDDLE EAST 1990-1991

Country	Population (millions)	Armed Forces		Combat Aircraft	Tanks
		Active	Reserves		
Syria	12.4	404,000	400,000	658	4,000
Jordan	4.1	85,250	35,000	128	1,150
Iraq	19.1	1,000,000	(E)850,000	689	(E)5,600
Saudi Arabia	14.1	67,500	–	189	550
Libya	4.6	85,000	40,000	548	2,000
Algeria	25.5	125,500	150,000	295	900
TOTAL	79.7	1,767,250	1,475,000	2,507	14,200
Israel	4.6	141,000	504,000	730	4,288
Ratio	1:17	1:12.5	1:2.9	1:3.4	1:3.3

Source: The Military Balance 1990-1991, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London
(E) Estimate

Figure 17. Military balance chart showing Syria's military strength. Chart from the Israel Information Center, Jerusalem, 1991. Courtesy of the Israeli Consulate, Houston, Texas.

In light of the evidence, it becomes very clear that Syria is still a major military power in the region and that it has the capability to wage a limited war that could have disastrous results for Israel, especially if the Golan Heights buffer zone was removed.

The IDF "Final Line" Proposal

IDF leaders know that the future of the Golan Heights rests in the hands of the politicians and that the role of the military is to provide the best possible defense in support of the decisions which those government officials make (Pinkas 1994, 14). However, the military does play a key role in influencing national policies and their input in the decision making process is highly valued; the Golan Heights issue is no exception. The IDF is opposed to a total withdrawal from the Golan, but is aware that Prime Minister Rabin's phased withdrawal may very well take place. Therefore, they have proposed a plan which incorporates withdrawal with retention of some important ground in the Golan.

According to Zeev Schiff, military affairs expert for the Israeli paper Haaretz, the IDF plan recommends that in the event of a withdrawal, Israel should keep the western most edge of the Golan Heights. This area, two to

six kilometers wide, extends from Mount Hermon along the top of the escarpments south to the Sea of Galilee. According to IDF Chief of Staff, Ehud Barak, one the primary reasons for such a proposal was to retain some of Mount Hermon in order to maintain Israel's good early warning capability, i.e., <u>observation</u> of Syria's military movements in the Golan. (Mideast Mirror 1994)

If Israel were to implement this "final line" proposal, the area retained would only further diminish the already relatively small number of IDF troops stationed in the Golan. One observer poignantly points out the precarious position the Israelis would end up in under a withdrawal where the majority of IDF forces were operating west of the ridge line:

> The topography of the Israeli held Golan limits Syrian armored forces, in an attack on Israel, to a total of 10-15 kilometers of front at those two gaps [the Valley of Tears in the north and the apex of the shoulder of volcanic hills in the south]. Without the Golan, Israel would be forced to field a much larger standing force as it would then be forced to defend a 60 kilometer front against an enemy that would now be attacking downhill (figure 18) (Langfan 1992a).

Although not the best situation, the "final line" proposal would allow Israel to keep a watchful eye on Syria's military movements as well as provide early warning in the event of a Syrian SCUD or air attack.

GOLAN BALANCE OF FORCES

ISRAELI FORCES
JUST OVER CREST
(CURRENT CEASE-
FIRE LINE)

A

MOUNTAIN

STANDING
ISRAELI
FORCES

MUCH
LARGER
STANDING
SYRIAN
FORCES

B

MOUNTAIN

STANDING
ISRAELI
FORCES

STANDING
SYRIAN
FORCES

C
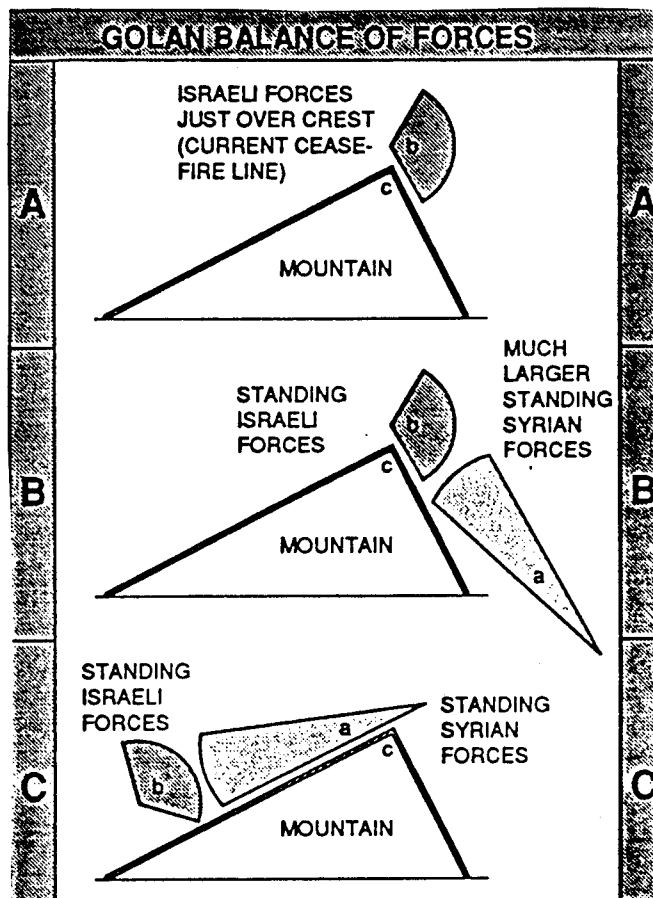
MOUNTAIN

A. Israel's present position on the Heights.

B. The small Israeli force balances out the much larger Syrian force because it holds the crest.

C. If Israel moves back just a little it loses the crest and critical mountain passes. The much larger standing Syrian forces will overwhelm the small standing Israeli forces.

Figure 18. The drastic change in defensive posture of Israeli forces in the Golan if control of the ridge line were lost. Illustration from Mark Langfan, 1992 Briefing on the Golan Heights. (Dallas: Zionist Organization of America)

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Israel, Syria and the Prospect of War

At this point a word needs to be mentioned about the prospect of a war with Syria. With peace treaties signed between Israel and three of its former enemies, Egypt, Jordan and the PLO, it seems to be the logical step to want peace with Syria. Prime Minister Rabin, who said in a 1992 election speech that to withdraw from the Golan would be to surrender Israeli security, has displayed his urgency to sign a treaty by recently stating that Israel can still have peace with the Golan in Syria's possession (Haberman 1994a). The Rabin government justifies this 180 degree change in thinking by pointing to a narrow "window of opportunity" which, if not taken advantage of, will lead to war with Syria. Refuting this "peace or war" theory, Dore Gold, Director of the US Foreign and Defense Policy Project - Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University, cites senior military officers who explain that Syria, although militarily capable, is not in the best position to wage a war with Israel if a peace treaty falls through. He mentions three primary reasons: first, Syria can no longer depend on Russian military intervention or support in a conflict with Israel. Second, Syrian-Turkish relations are

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predicted to worsen over the next few years as territorial and Euphrates water disputes continue to rage, and third, the projected rise of Iraq as a regional power when U.N. sanctions are lifted. However, Gold does not totally dismiss the idea that war is possible and cites an inappropriate or humiliating break in talks as a reason which may force Assad to arms in order to save his regime. (Gold 1994)

At first glance this argument seems to support proponents of withdrawal by making it appear that Syria is no longer a threat, and, therefore, should be trusted in a land for peace agreement. However, the point of this argument is that Israel does not have to be pressured into making a quick decision about withdrawing from the Golan, i.e., fear of going to war if peace is not made right away is a fallacy. It may not be in the best interest of Syria to take aggressive action today, but that in no way implies that Syria is no longer a threat to Israel. As long as the Israelis hold the Golan, the deterrence factor remains high, and this gives Israel time to discern Syria's intentions in the peace process.

This concept of deterrence is an important factor as Israel faces an unknown Syria in the future. An important question Israelis need to keep asking is, What

will happen to Syria when Assad is gone? The contenders for the lead position vary greatly, from the loyal Assad follower Major General Ali Aslan, Deputy Army Chief of Staff, to Assad's brother Rifaat, who returned to Syria in 1992 after being exiled in 1983 after a coup attempt. Additionally, the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood still exists as an underground organization and is waiting for their opportunity to return, an event one writer described as a "nightmare scenario." (Wedeman 1994)

The issue of Assad's successor is an important one for the Israelis to consider before making a final decision over the Golan's disposition.

In light of the evidence presented, it becomes very clear that even in today's modern battlefield, Israel, like all other modern nations, must still rely on ground forces and the proper utilization of terrain in order to successfully execute the military strategies required to meet its strategic defense objectives.

CHAPTER NINE

ISRAEL, THE GOLAN HEIGHTS AND WATER

"We never know the worth of water till
the well is dry."
    - Thomas Fuller, Gnomologia, 5451

Adding to the strategic importance of the Golan Heights is the fact that it is a critical factor in the water issue which is fast dominating the scene in Israel and other nations in the Levant Rift. Water from the Golan Heights provides 10 percent of Israel's overall water supply (Hoch 1993, 17). Additionally, these waters make a significant contribution to the Upper Jordan and Galilee water resources which supply 1,000 million cubic meters, or more than half, of Israel's overall water demand.[6] (Kally 1993, 49).

Many scholars are in agreement that the issue of water scarcity and allocation of existing resources is of vital importance in the ongoing peace process; some even warn that this issue has become so serious that it could very well be the catalyst for the next military

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[6]The water estimates used throughout this paper are not exact as estimates vary among the different studies. Marcia Drezon-Tepler gives a good summary of the reasons for these variances. See Drezon-Tepler 1994, 284.

conflict in the Middle East (Drezon-Tepler 1994, 281; Feuilherade 1994; Kemp 1991, 215; Reuger 1993, 82; Wachtel 1993).

Water disputes have always played some part in the Arab-Israeli conflict, but it has been, and continues to be, an area of particular antagonism between Israel and Syria. For this reason, and in light of the importance of water resources in the Middle East as a whole, as well as Israel's reliance on the Golan water resource specifically, it becomes quite clear that Israel can not afford to withdraw from the Golan Heights and forfeit her protection over one of the main headwaters of the Upper Jordan. According to the IDF, the security of Israel's water sources is dependent upon Israel's physical presence in the Golan, particularly the Hermon shoulder (Israel Defence Forces Spokesman, 1981)

To better understand why Israel needs to maintain control over this area, it is important to understand a little of its hydrology as well as the history of the water conflict between Syria and Israel.

Headwaters of the Jordan: Life line of Israel

As previously mentioned, the Jordan River is one of three main sources of water for Israel, the other two

being the coastal plain aquifer and the Yarqon- Tanninim aquifer in central Israel (figure 19) (Drezon-Tepler 1994, 283; Kally 1993, 49)

The primary source of water for the Upper Jordan comes from the precipitation on Mount Hermon, situated on the border between Syria and Lebanon. Because of the elevation of this mountain (9,232 feet) and its exposure towards the west, it receives an annual average rainfall of 51 inches, with peaks to 66 inches, a majority which is stored as snow. This water soaks into the ground, feeding large underground reservoirs, and drains off of the south-western flanks of the mountain working its way to the Jordan. The main water supply, or headwaters, for the Jordan river comes from three large springs which feed the Hasbani river, originating in Lebanon, the Banias river, which originates at Banias in the Golan, and the Dan river, originating at Dan in Israel (Karmon 1971, 163; Naff 1984, 17,18). These three sources, which converge near the northern edge of the Huleh valley, six kilometers inside Israel, become the Upper Jordan river which flows into the Sea of Galilee. (figure 20) (Drazon-Tepler 1994, 283; Karmon 1971, 163)

The Upper Jordan and the Sea of Galilee are projected to continue to produce more than 500 million

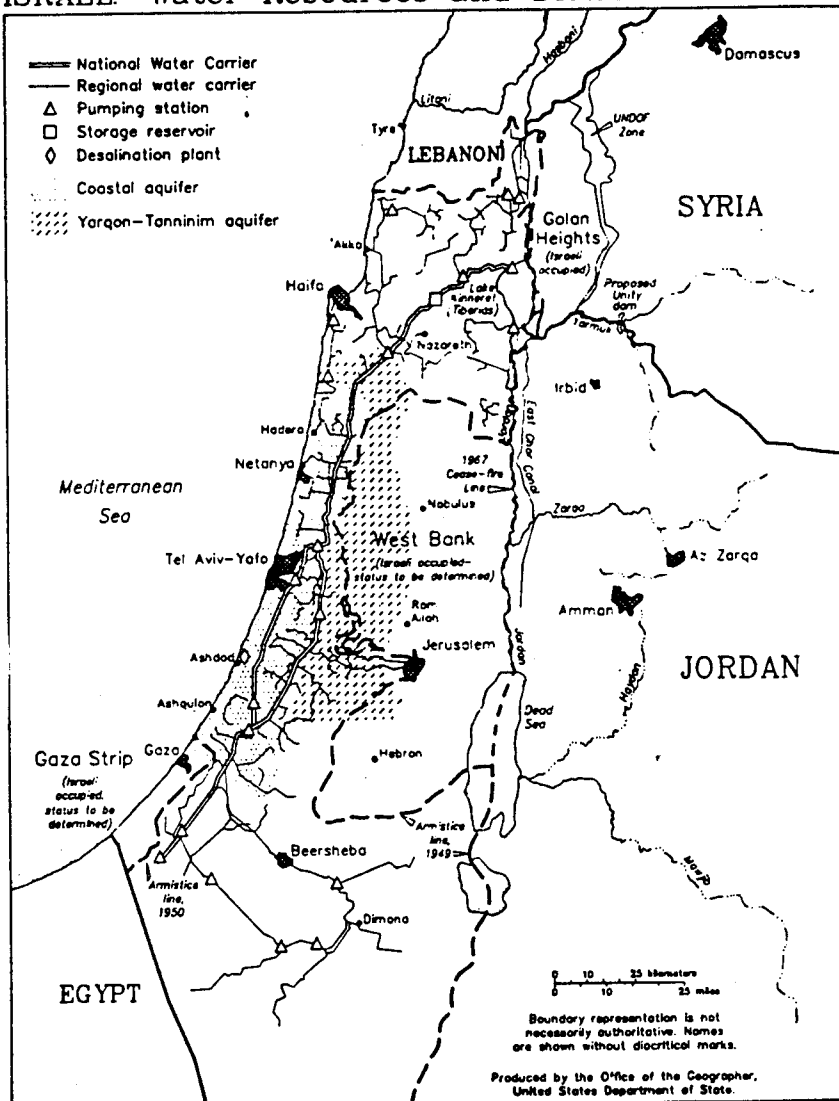## ISRAEL: Water Resources and Distribution

Figure 19. The main water sources for Israel. Map from the office of the Geographer, U.S. Department of State (Washington D.C.).
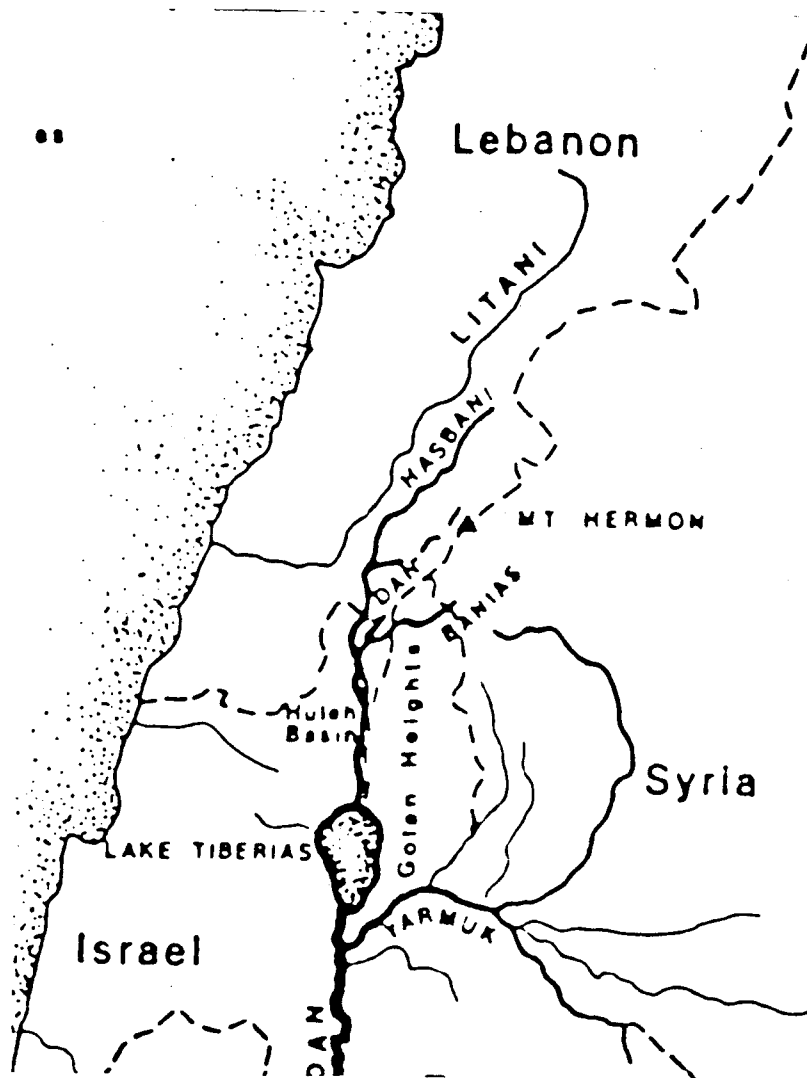
Figure 20. The Jordan River System. Map from Thomas Naff and Ruth C. Matson, *eds. Water and the Middle East. Conflict or Cooperation.* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 18.

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cubic meters per year for the rest of this century; yet, this seemingly large amount will not meet the increasing demand for water in the region (Kally 1993, 49). Israel presently utilizes almost 100 percent of its water resources, most of which goes towards agriculture, and will not be able to meet future needs if drastic measures to procure more water do not take place. (Kally 1993, 49; Perry 1993, 19; Reguer 1993, 78) With a water crisis at hand, Israel can not just hand over territory that contributes to such a large percentage of her overall supply. Only under the umbrella of full peace and mutual cooperation could such an endeavor ever be seriously considered. This is attested to by the fact that the World Bank will not finance projects where all parties are not in agreement (Reguer 1993, 78).

Water in Palestine: A Historical Perspective

The fact that a water crisis was forth-coming among the riparian states is not new revelation;[7] plans for the development of water resources in this region were made as far back as the Ottoman Empire, as illustrated

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[7]The riparian states are Israel, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

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by the 1913 Yarmuk diversion plan (Naff 1984, 30). In the early 1920s the British and French Mandate governments met to discuss water issues which included irrigation and power generation utilizing the Yarmuk and the Jordan rivers (Naff 1984, 30). The issue was still being addressed in the 1930s as a number of water engineers, companies, agencies and governments--to include the U.S. Department of Agriculture, designed plans, developed policies and allocated money in order to supply adequate amounts of water and ensure fair allocation of the resource. (Drezon-Tepler 1994, 285; Kally 1993, 5-6)

In the 1940s, prior to Israel's Independence, more plans were developed, the most comprehensive being developed by an Israeli engineer named Shimon Blass. His design utilized all of the region's major water sources and included a plan to bring water into the Dead Sea from the Mediterranean (Kally 1993, 6-7).

In addition to the Blass plan, a comprehensive plan was developed by J.B. Hays, an American engineer hired by the World Zionist Organization. His plan included Syria, Lebanon and Transjordan and suggested a national water carrier and a central water reserve (Kally 1993, 7-8; others).

Despite all of these plans, no major water plans

were implemented and no cooperation on water usage took place among the nations of the region until the end of 1947.

Early disagreement among various agencies and countries as to how the water resources should be exploited and allocated foreshadowed the greater conflicts yet to come. For example, the 1939 Transjordanian Ionides plan made a proposal which would have diverted the Yarmuk's waters into Transjordan, while a few years later, in 1944, the Lowdermilk Plan, modeled after the American Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), supported opposing Jewish plans to divert the Yarmuk into the Sea of Galilee. Other significant areas of dispute were the use of water from the Litani river in Lebanon and the building of canals to irrigate the Jordan Valley and the Negev as well as to bring water from the Mediterranean into the Dead Sea. (Drezon-Tepler 1994, 285-286; Naff 1984, 32)

It is important to note at this point that " no country was using any of those water resources that were under consideration for sharing" prior to Israel's birth as a nation in 1947 (Kally 1993, 8).

Arab-Israeli Water Conflicts

After the establishment of Israel as an independent nation, disputes over water were incorporated into the overall Arab-Israeli conflict. One reason for these constant disputes was that the 1949 armistice did not include division or allocation of water sources, so each country began its own unilateral project using the Jordan (Naff 1984, 35).

Once Israel gained its independence, Israelis didn't waste any time developing ways to exploit the available water resources. Work began by draining swamps, especially the large swamp in the Huleh valley, which, according to one researcher who referred to a 1960 Tahal (Israeli Water Authority) report, saved Israel 60 million cubic meters (mcm) of water per year that was previously lost to evaporation (Kally 1993, 11). This action gave rise to many armed exchanges between Israel and Syria as Syria protested the draining of the Huleh swamp as a violation of the demilitarized zone (Naff 1984, 35).

Also, in the first half of the 1950s an American engineer, J.S. Cotton, was commissioned by Israel to turn the Hays plan into something tangible. The result of

Cotton's labor was the plan for the National Water Carrier (NWC). Using the Sea of Galilee as a storage area, this large canal and pipe system was designed to divert water from the Upper Jordan River to the southern part, or Negev, of Israel. However, the NWC would not be completed for another ten years. In the meantime, Israel built the Yarkon-Negev water carrier, the nation's largest water system prior to the NWC. (Kally 1993, 11-13)

In the early 1950s, the first major dispute with Syria over water took place after the Israelis began a project that would channel the Upper Jordan's water from the Israeli-Syria border into Israel. This action took place after the Main-Klapp Report, a United Nations Refugee Works Agency (UNRWA) effort, was issued. This report allocated only 32.5 percent of the entire regions water resources to Israel. After Syria complained to the United Nations Security Council, insisting that Israel's diversion would interfere with Syrian irrigation above the Sea of Galilee, and America threatened to remove its financial aid, the Israelis discontinued the project until it could be resolved by the U.N. (Kally 1993, 16)

In the mid-1950s, US Ambassador Eric Johnston,

working for President Eisenhower, came up with a a plan to utilize the region's water sources fairly among the riparian states. He aggressively pursued a shuttle diplomacy between the nations and was able to get approval from all the participants, including the Arab League's Technical Committee. However, the proposal was eventually shot down by the Arab League Political Committee with the deciding negative vote being cast by the Premier of Syria (Reguer 1993, 68).

It was only after this rejection that Israel adopted the Ten-Year Plan for unilateral water development, moving the source point of the NWC from Gesher B'not Ya'akov, the bridge crossing the upper Jordan river, to the Sea of Galilee, and implementing plans that were consistent with the Johnston plan[8] (figure 21)(Reguer 1993, 70-71).

After Israel's plans became known, the conflict

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[8]This shift was a large sacrifice for the Israelis because it eliminated the potential for electric power generation, utilized water with a higher salinity and required an extra effort to pump water up from the Sea of Galilee. The sacrifice was made in order to avoid a confrontation with Syria as well as to ensure that Israel-US relations would remain healthy in order for Israel to receive continuing political and economic support. (Reguer 1993, 71)
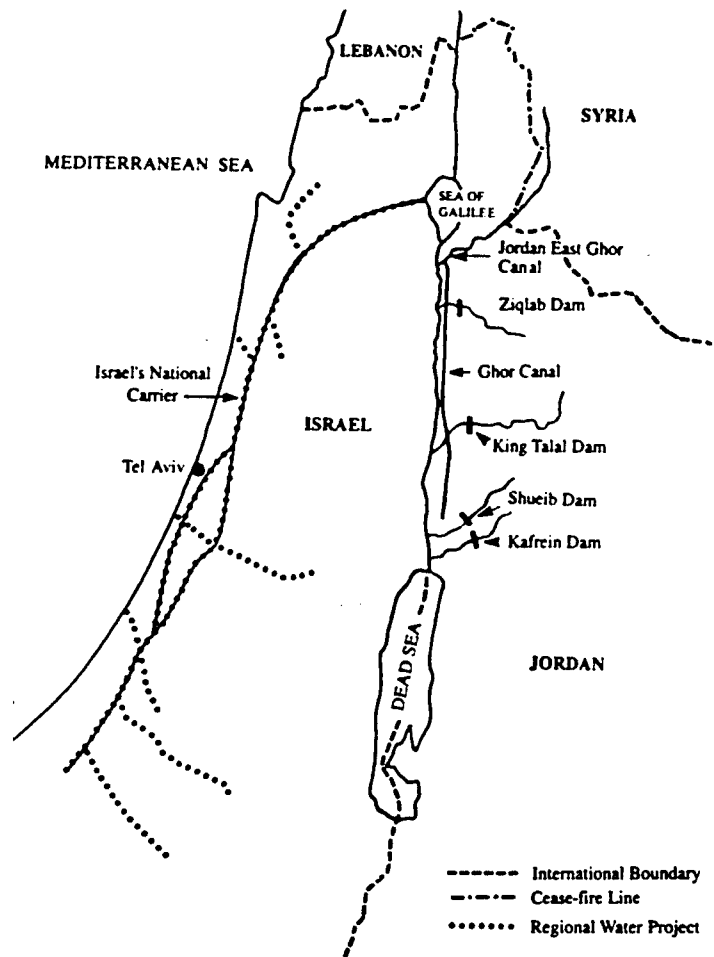
Figure 21. Israel's National Water Carrier. Map from
Elisha Kally, *Water and Peace. Water Resources and the
Arab-Israeli Peace Process* (Westport, Conn: Praeger,
1993), 50.

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over water began to intensify as the Arab League planned ways to disrupt Israel's NWC plan (Reguer 1993, 73). In 1964, the NWC, which is still in use today, became operational. The next year, on 16 January 1965, the first terrorist plot to disrupt the NWC was discovered; a bomb, which failed to detonate, was discovered near an aqueduct (Rabin 1979, 62) These water-related terrorist events, which began in the early 1950s, steadily increased and eventually led to further armed conflicts between Israel and Syria. Between the Spring of 1951 and the Spring of 1967, there were at least eleven water-related confrontations (Naff 1984, 36-37; Rabin 1979, 62).

Past Syrian-Israeli Water Conflicts

Before discussing the escalation in the water conflict between Israel and Syria, it is important to note that Syria only developed "small scale" water projects from the 1930s until the 1960s. No work was done to improve, or hinder, the flow of the the Banias spring, which already flowed from the Golan Heights into Israeli territory (Kally 1993, 21).

In 1961 a proposal was adopted by the Arab League to divert the Banias river in Syria to the Yarmuk and then

dam the Yarmuk. The purpose for this diversion was to deprive Israel of the Banias water source in response to Israel's NWC project. Three years later, after Israel began running tests on the NWC, the Arabs met again and decided to build a dam on the Yarmuk to hold the diverted Banias and Hasbani waters (figure 22)(Naff 1984, 44; Rabin 1979, 62; Reguer 1993, 73).

Despite Israel's adherence to the Johnston Plan,[9] United states approval and support for Israel's claim to its share of water, and threats by Israel that she would protect her vital interests and sovereign rights concerning water, the Syrians began the diversion of the Jordan headwaters in January of 1965. Israel responded with military strikes that destroyed the Syrian engineering equipment and halted the diversion project (Fisher 1990, 610; Reguer 1993, 73-75). Two years later, the Six Day War broke out and Israel ended up with possession of the Banias source, as well as the northern bank of the Yarmuk where the Arabs were building their dam. (Reguer 1993, 76).

Once Israel gained control of the Golan Heights, no

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[9]Both Israel and Jordan's unilateral plans operated within the Johnston Plan limits. Israel's initial capacity for the NWC was below limits (Naff 1984, 43).
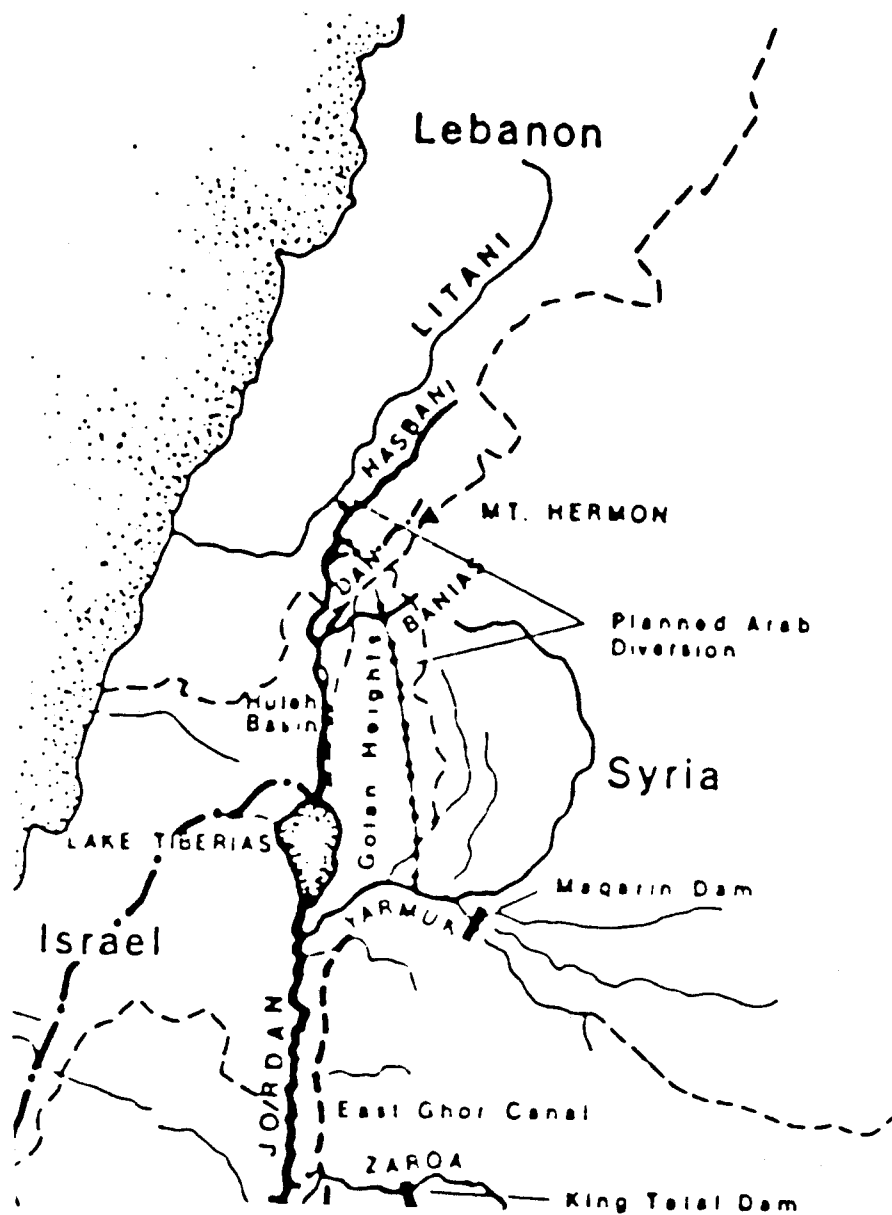
Figure 22. The planned Arab diversions of the Hasbani and Banias rivers. Map from Thomas Naff and Ruth C. Matson, eds. *Water in the Middle East. Conflict of Cooperation.* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 24.

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further efforts were made by Syria to divert the Jordan headwaters because they had lost access to the vital water sources.

Current Efforts and Syrian Non-Participation

Even though Syria no longer has the capability to physically interrupt the flow of water from the Golan into Israel, Assad and his regime have, as recently as 1994, continued their policy of non-cooperation in regards to regional water issues. Only Syria and Lebanon have consistently boycotted the water talks that have been taking place. The participants in these talks, which are aimed at solving the regions water problems, are not only riparian states, but also other Middle Eastern, North African and European nations. (Hoch 1993)

How can Israel possibly consider giving territory, vital for water supply, over to a nation that will not even participate in talks concerning water resources on a Middle East and even worldwide level? Even if Syria did participate in the talks, Israel has very good cause to be suspicious of Assad's intentions.

Because Israel is presently exploiting almost all of its available water resources, new sources are

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constantly being sought out and investigated. Some of the proposals which have been brought forward include: more desalinization plants, waste water treatment, rehabilitation of municipal water supply systems and even giant water bags which can be pulled by tugboat from Turkey (Feuilherade 1994; Hoch 1993; Wachtel 1993).

One proposal which needs special attention is the "Turkish Peace Pipeline". This plan, initially proposed by the late Turkish President Ozal, calls for some 6 mcm a day to be piped into the region of water from Turkey, via a canal or pipeline, which would cross Syria (Wachtel 1993). This option, which was turned down by the wealthier Gulf States, is not a viable option for the Israelis either, from a strategic perspective. In the event of future conflicts this source would quickly become vulnerable to hostile action and ultimately end up inaccessible.[10]

The feasibility of a "water pipeline" being

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[10]It is obvious that rivers are also vulnerable to hostile action during wars, but damming a water source is not as easy as turning a valve and shutting off a water supply. Of course poisoning water sources with biological or chemical agents is always a danger of war. The point of this argument is that reliance on external sources is not strategically wise as compared to better utilization of indigenous resources.

captured and shut down can be seen today in the now closed Trans-Arabian pipeline (Tapline). In the 1960's the Tapline, which was built in the 1950s, delivered twenty five million tons of crude oil per year via the 1,068 mile long line. The Tapline's point of origin was the Saudi Arabian coast and its final destination was the coast of Lebanon. A major portion of the line ran through the Golan Heights, a factor which caused interruption of Tapline operation during the Arab-Israeli conflicts and which contributed to its eventual closing in 1975 (figure 23). (Collelo 1988, 150; Held 1989, 125-126)

Answers to Arab Accusations on Israel's Water Policies

A brief word needs to be said about accusations against Israel's water policies. In the past, Israel has been accused of unfair allocation of water resources, especially in the West Bank and Gaza (Kahhaleh 1981). However, the fact is that today Israel does deal fairly with Arabs and Israelis alike. An example is the restraints placed on pumping water from the mountain aquifer; both West Bank occupants and occupants of Israel proper are restricted from increasing their amounts (Drezon-Tepler, 1994, 291). This is only one

Figure 23. The Trans-Arabian pipeline as it crosses the Golan. Map provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce (Springfield, VA: National Technical Information Service, 1991)

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example; there are a number of issues, such as allocation of drinking water and water usage for farming, etc., which the Israelis are condemned for, but when looked at carefully, it becomes apparent that practices are indeed fair and implemented to make the best use of the indigenous water sources which are still available in Israel.[11]

Another area where Israel is accused of wrong doing deals with the waters of the Litani river in Lebanon. Some have accused Israel of invading Lebanon, under cover of routing terrorists, for no other reason that to exploit the Litani's waters (Farid 1985). Answering questions after a special Middle East symposium on November 16, 1993, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin made the following statement concerning the Israeli presence in Lebanon:

> We will vacate all Lebanese sovereign soil on two conditions--a security arrangement, that will not infringe on their sovereignty or on the Lebanese territory and the handling of the Lebanese that were in the security zone...We have no territorial problems, we do not want one square inch of Lebanese soil or one cubic meter of their water. (Nader 1993)

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[11]For a more in-depth examination regarding Israel's water exploitation and allocation policies in the territories see Drezon-Tepler 1994, 290-295.

In addition to Prime Minister Rabin's remarks, Lebanese officials have also stated, as recently as June 1994, that there is no proof to the accusation that Israel is diverting water from the Litani river. This statement was released in response to a recent U.N. report which made the accusations (Reuters 1994).

The purpose for showing the other side of these two issues was to demonstrate that Israel is not trying to create national or international problems, but rather is indeed willing to work with her people and her neighbors to help find solutions to the water crisis in the region.

Until the Israelis can be completely sure that their water interests in the Golan will be protected, it would be foolish for them to withdraw. With such an important resource at stake, it would be wise not to gamble with returning the Heights in mere hopes for peace.

CHAPTER TEN

THE ISSUE OF THE GOLAN SETTLEMENTS

"The worst policy is to attack cities.
Attack cities only when there is no
alternative."
- Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

As already mentioned, the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights simultaneously ended years of Syrian harassment while drastically enhancing Israel's national defense posture with an increase in strategic depth. After their offer of the return of land for peace was flatly rejected, they quickly settled the new territory.

The Post-1967 Settlements

Immediately after the 1967 war, there were only six remaining villages which were still inhabited; five Druze and one Nusseiri. The population of the entire area was only 6,400 (Melrod 1987). With so much land and so few people, the primary goal of the first Israeli settlements was to occupy the land. A total of eleven agricultural settlements were developed then the Golan Heights, two of which were not located in the southern portion of the Golan. Five of these settlements were established by the NAHAL; however, the security issue began to quickly take

the back seat to agriculture. This change in mission was due primarily to the fact that the settlements had to produce in order not to be a burden on the rest of the state. Initially, the new settlements had a total of about 15,000 acres at their disposal.(Efrat 1988, 121; Harris 1980, 67)

The original plans for the first ten years of settlement of the Golan called for the establishment of seventeen to twenty-two agricultural settlements, with a combined total of 20 to 25,000 people, with one urban center, Kuneitra, with about 10,000. Additionally, the remaining Druze villages would add another 10,000 to the overall Golan population. This plan was later revised in 1969 to include 30,000 in the urban center. The Kibbutzim and Moshavim were to grow crops that would not compete with production in Israel while at the same time utilizing crops which were best suited to the region. Settlements in the south would concentrate on cultivating field crops, olives, subtropical and other types of fruits, while the northern settlements would focus primarily on sheep and cattle. (Efrat 1988, 117-118)

Between 1969 and 1973, a transformation began to take place which contributed to the reason these

settlements were evacuated prior to the 1973 war. More "urbanites" began to settle the area, mostly immigrants from America, Great Britain and Russia, and with them came new ideas about industry and tourism. From 1971 to 1972, two non-agricultural settlements were created, a ski village on Mount Hermon and an aircraft industries plant in the south. Additionally, settlement blocks, or strings of settlements located about 12 miles apart, slowly began to form with the majority, i.e., more than half of the Jewish population, located in the south. The trend was to settle in the south, in the north or in Kuneitra, thus leaving the central Golan neglected. The reason for this was that the smaller Moshavim, or family farms, needed to be closer to their land, so they settled in the south, while the larger cooperative settlements were started in the north. Because the central area was relatively bare in resources, it was not cost effective to live there. (Efrat 1988, 119; Harris 1980, 67)

This disparity in settlements left a large gap in the central region which would quickly be exploited by the Syrians in the 1973 war.(Efrat 1988, 119; Harris 1980, 68)

The Yom Kippur War and Post-1973 Settlements

The trend away from establishing front line paramilitary settlements, as well as the neglect of fortifying the central Golan, took its toll at the outset of the war when, unlike the War of Independence, the settlers in the Golan had to be evacuated. Not only did Israel lose by not having the settlements as additional lines of defense, but they actually were a drain on the active duty force as soldiers were utilized to evacuate the settlers. (Harris 1980, 71, 80)

After the war, the Israelis realized their mistakes in neglecting the settlements in the Golan, especially in the central region. In addition to more settlements, the government realized that the Golan defenses needed to be rebuilt.(Efrat 1988, 121)

On 31 May 1974, the Syrian-Israeli Disengagement Agreement was signed and Kuneitra was returned to Syria; however, Israel retained the western outskirts and surrounding hills (Efrat 1988, 124; Harris 1980, 89). Later that year 18 settlements were being supported by 13,250 acres of cultivated land and 75,000 acres of land allocated for sheep and cattle (Efrat 1988, 121). Israel once again was taking advantage of their newly acquired

and previously unused lands and turning them into productive areas of settlement.

In 1975, after the Israelis decided once again to use Golan settlements as the main line of defense in the north, money and resources flooded into the area and the population "developed an increasingly adamant objection to any territorial compromise there." (Efrat 1988, 122)

The 1975 plan was very different from earlier plans to settle the Golan and was accompanied by a greater sense of urgency. The plan called for:

> ...comprising a border defence screen of four mixed agriculture-industry settlements, an inner group of four industrial villages and a Golan City to the rear, and it was to involve similarly greater populations. For example the non-urban structure would alone contain upwards of 4,500 people, three times the equivalent 1973 figure. (Harris 1980, 80)

By 1976 there were four main settlements in the Golan central region: Katzrin, which would grow to become the largest city and regional capital for the Golan; Yonatan, Ma'ale Gamla and Sha'al. With the addition of new towns came the building of new infrastructures, e.g., roads, power supplies and water systems. (Efrat 1988, 125).

In 1977, a new right-wing government in Israel, led by the Likud's Menachem Begin, brought the issue of Golan

settlements back to center stage with the net result
being a push to build up the central area (Efrat 1988,
121-122).

More settlers moved into the area between 1977 and
1987, increasing the number of settlements to thirty-
one. The Jewish population of the Golan Heights rose from
2,200 to 8,000 with 6,500 in the settlements and 1,500 in
Katzrin. The Druze population numbered approximately
13,000 in 1987 (Efrat 1988, 125-126). By 1992 the number
of settlements had grown to thirty-three (figure 24).

Military Administration in the Golan

With Israeli occupation in 1967 came the
establishment of the military administration. The
purpose of this administration was to restore law and
order, ensure security of the area and to oversee the
scale down from military to civilian operation.

Local law remained in force; however, the IDF
Commander "assumed all administrative, appointive,
legislative and governmental powers." (Israel Defence
Forces Spokesman, 1981)

The Israeli administration was responsible for
developing the Golan, which had been neglected by the
Syrian government in many areas. The administration

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Figure 24. Israeli Settlements in the Golan as of 1992.
Map provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce
(Springfield, VA: National Technical Information
Service, 1992).

brought the wage system up to Israeli standards, started a welfare program to help the needy, upgraded the school systems by providing new equipment and raising the mandatory attendance rule to nine years. They opened new medical facilities, upgraded outdated and unreliable power services, began a new transportation system, helped introduce new farming techniques and trained the local population, who under Assad's rule were seventy percent unskilled menial laborers or migrant workers. Additionally, the administration ensured that residents, mostly Druze, were free to exercise their faiths, and provided aid for the building or repair of their places of worship. (Israel Defence Forces Spokesman 1981)

On December 13, 1981, Prime Minister Menachem Begin announced that the Golan would fall under Israeli legal jurisdiction. With that declaration he annexed 1,675 sq. kilometers of territory, and placed 6,600 Jews and 13,000 Druze under Israeli Law (Silver 1984, 244)

The Golan is the only territory taken in 1967 to be annexed by Israel, the act of which was immediately rejected and condemned by the international community (Held 1989, 156).

Sinai Settlements: Not a Precedent for the Golan

Some supporters of a Golan withdrawal refer to the Sinai withdrawal which took place in agreement with the 1978 Camp David Accords. However, upon closer examination, it becomes quite clear that the Golan settlements are not the same as the previous Sinai settlements and, therefore, should not be compared to them.

First of all, the settlements in the Golan have been in place since 1967 and have continued to progressively grow and develop both physically and economically, whereas the number of settlements evacuated from the Sinai was 18 with a total population 3000. Investments are still being made in the Golan as evidenced by recent expenditures of more than $3.5 million in two industrial parks, $2 million in an expansion project of Israel's largest mineral-water plant--which had $17.5 million in sales in 1992, a total $9 million in the Golan ski industry, and $5 million in the Golan Winery, the nation's most successful winery with sales for 1994 projected to be $9 million (Sandler 1994). These are just some of the industries which make the Golan a financial asset to Israel.

During the Sinai evacuation each of the settlers was given a compensatory payment in return for their voluntary relocation (Silver 1984, 247). An equivalent action taken by the government today in order to relocate thirty-three settlements would add an extra burden on the already strained Israeli economy. In addition to the loss of revenue from the Israeli settlements and the cost of relocation, the IDF, as previously mentioned, would have to increase their capabilities, both in manpower and equipment, in order to keep security of the state at an acceptable level; this would only add to the already existing financial pressures.

An additional contrast between the Golan Settlements and those of the Sinai is the concept of strategic depth as mentioned above. Even though Israel presently has no settlements in the Sinai, the geographic layout prohibits a surprise Egyptian build up. Also, the Egyptians could not sneak across the Sinai undetected and surprise Israel. On the other hand, as previously discussed, a Syrian occupied Golan Heights can very well support a build-up of Syrian troops, and potential aggressors have only a short distance to travel to get into Israel. Even if Egypt used surface-to-surface missiles and intense air strikes against Israel, it would

still take time for the occupying forces to reach the borders. This would not be the case in a Syrian occupied Golan.

The issue of settlements is the third and final point in the argument supporting the retention of the Golan Heights on the ground of its geostrategic importance. Added to national defense and the water issue, the case for retention becomes very strong. Any compromise of land for peace could only come with an unconditional guarantee of peace, something the Syrian regime has not been willing to offer.

The basic question that Israel must ask then is, "Can Assad and his government be trusted?" This issue of trust, as well as other socio-cultural and socio-political differences, is the focus of the last Part of this study.

PART III

THE GOLAN AND SYRIAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS:
SOCIO-CULTURAL AND SOCIO-POLITICAL
BARRIERS TO LASTING PEACE

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

ISRAELI-SYRIAN NEGOTIATIONS TODAY

"The ongoing peace process cannot be
completed without an Israeli
withdrawal from the whole of the
Syrian Golan and the south of
Lebanon."
                - October 3, 1994 press statement
                  by Farouk al-Shara, Syrian
                  Foreign Minister.

It is from the previously mentioned background
that the present day peace negotiations between Israel
and Syria emerge. Many Israelis were initially shocked
when Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, after being asked
about the possibility of an Israeli withdrawal from the
Golan Heights, replied, "We are not only ready, we are
committed to do so." (Hedges 1993) However, this is not
the monumental statement that it first appears to be. In
June of 1975, Rabin stated that: "Israel would not come
down from the Golan Heights--not completely anyway" and
again in December 1976 he stated: "We cannot come down
from the Golan Heights, though this does not mean we have
to stick to the present line." (Nisan 1978, 159) These
early statements, combined with the efforts to return
the Golan in exchange for peace after the 1967 war,
clearly indicate that some Israeli leaders have been

willing to consider returning the Golan despite the fact that it has strategic importance for the nation's security. (Nisan 1978, 159; Collelo 1988, 247).

The Syrian Stumbling Block

However, the chief stumbling block to successful peace negotiations, past and present, has repeatedly been the Syrian government. The Syrians, as recently as October 1994, have tenaciously held to a "no compromise" attitude of complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights (Goodman 1994; Immanuel 1994). This is a carry over of the 1967 Khartoum agreement: "no negotiations, no compromise." As discussed earlier, this attitude is completely contrary to international law when it comes to who dictates the terms of a peace agreement after an armed conflict.

Even though Syria continues to take a hard stand on the withdrawal issue, in light of the peace agreements between Israel, the PLO, Syria, and recently Jordan, the Syrian government, along with, Morocco, Tunisia and other Arab states, has undergone a dramatic change in its attitude towards the Israelis, even going so far as to state that it wants to make peace with Israel. (Haberman 1994a; Goodman 1994). Israel has jumped at this

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opportunity to make a settlement with Syria, the final obstacle to regional peace. In their zeal to acquire this peace, the Israelis have discussed plans to return the Golan to Syria, in a phased withdrawal, but "only if they can have guarantees that missiles and howitzers never be deployed there" (Schmidt 1993b). As previously discussed, the Golan is crucial for Israeli security and a compromise, especially if it ends up being a total withdrawal, is only certain to bring trouble a few years down the road.

To complicate matters further, Israel has to deal with the internal problem of what to do with the 15,000 to 20,000 settlers who have made the Golan Heights their home and have recently expressed deep concern, vocally and politically--even to the point of demonstrating via hunger strikes, over the possibility of the region returning to Syria (Curtius 1994; Rudge 1994). Additionally, the Israeli government has to take into consideration the people, who, at this time, are not in favor of a complete withdrawal from the Golan. In an opinion poll conducted in the first week of October 1994, 505 adult Israelis were asked how they would vote on a referendum on an agreement with Syria which required a full and phased withdrawal from the Golan. Sixty three

percent of those questioned said that they were against a full withdrawal while only thirty five percent supported it (Mideast Mirror 1994).

Despite the warning signs of no Syrian compromises and lack of support from the Israeli general public, dialogue continues between Israel and Syria toward the ultimate goal of a final and peaceful solution by means of a land for peace agreement. However, one more important issue needs to be addressed in order to see why the Golan must be retained by Israel. That issue is the deep seated socio-cultural and socio-political differences which separate these two nations and which make a true and lasting peace no small accomplishment, if possible at all.

CHAPTER TWELVE

SYRIA AND ISRAEL: A CLASH OF CULTURES

"In the final analysis, the Syrians believe
the conflict between Israel and the Arabs is
between two irreconcilable cultures and, as
such, can only be resolved by military
means."
- Yosef Olmert, 1990, quoted in *The
Future Battlefield and the Arab-
Israeli Conflict.*

The socio-cultural and socio-political
differences, combined with the past hostilities and
violent actions of the Syrians toward Israel, make the
trust issue of primary concern to the Israelis. Is
Syria's relatively recent desire to make peace with
Israel genuine, or is this some kind of political
maneuvering and manipulation of circumstances and world
opinion with a much larger agenda? As reported by some
observers, time is not an issue among the Arabs in their
struggle against Israel, immediate action is not always
required, because the ultimate defeat of Israel will come
when the Arab world is once again revitalized, even if it
takes decades (Goodman 1990, 16). Today, the Arab
nations are coming together in unity to make peace with
Israel, and Syria, uncharacteristically, appears to be
the next nation in line to sign a treaty. Are Assad and

his regime truly looking out for what is best for the two countries and the region as a whole, or is Israel, caught up in the euphoria of the recent peace efforts, blindly grasping for what is not there?

In order to see the magnitude of difference between the two nations, and hence the difficulties in coming to a resolution over the Golan issue, a discussion of some of the socio-cultural and socio-political barriers is in order.

Syria and Israel: East Meets West

If one makes even a brief study of Syrian and Israeli cultures, it quickly becomes quite obvious to see that these two nations are not very similar. Many of their socio-cultural characteristics, practices and accompanying values and attitudes are very different and, at times, are at complete opposite ends of the spectrum. It is these stark differences which create a number of "barriers", which, if not recognized and dealt with, will continue to impede the relationship between these two nations.

One of the more obvious barriers, which developed over the years between Syria and Israel, is that two very distinct and different cultures are coming together at

the negotiating table; an Arab culture deeply rooted in and influenced by the traditions of Islam and oriental thought; and a very Western oriented, modern and essentially secular Jewish cosmopolitan culture.

The large gap that has traditionally existed between Syria's predominantly agriculturally based society and Israel's technology based society, has produced a barrier that causes each party to look at the other as inferior. In the past, an "almost official" Israeli policy was adopted that expressed the sentiment that the Arabs, for the most part, are not as "modernized" as Israel and that better education and higher standards of living are "central to expressed Israeli hopes for peace" (Avineri 1970; Ben-Gurion 1971). This thought, which also came into existence among some Arabs, was best expressed by professor Constantine Zurayk following the disastrous experience of the 1967 war:

> The Arab society and the Israeli society with which we are faced, belong to two different civilisations, or two different phases of civlisation. This is the basic cause of our weakness despite our large numbers, and the strength of the Israelis despite their small numbers. When we reach their level, the problem will be solved by itself. (Zurayk 1967)

Assad himself recognized the disparity between his country and Israel and, starting in 1978, launched a campaign focused on strategic parity with his

neighboring state. He defines strategic parity as not only having the same number of tanks, but a parity in a number of other areas which include "the cultural, economic and political fields" (Pipes 1991a, 8).

The Role of Modernization

In the not too distant past, Israelis attributed the perceived backward behavior of the Arabs and subsequent stall in the peace process to a lack of education and modernization (Sharabi 1970). This was pretty much in line with the typical Western attitude which was condescending toward people from the East and geared toward encouraging them to abolish traditions and adopt more modern ways (Glubb 1966). This assumption, that modernization enhances the peace effort, turned out to be false as findings have proven a positive correlation of an increase of Arab nationalism with increased modernization (Beit-Hallahmi 1972). In other words, modernization is not the key to successful peace between these two nations, but rather an understanding of each other's cultural background.

Further, a barrier existed on the Arab side where western society may be viewed as more advanced in technology and the material realm but greatly lacking in

the area of morals; hence, Western democracy is not accepted by Arabs as the ideal for conducting political affairs (Glubb 1966). This contributes to the mutual lack of trust between Israel and the Arabs, especially Syria, which has consistently been the leader among Arab states in anti-Israeli rhetoric and actual hostilities since the 1930s (Pipes 1991a, 35). This lack of trust is an additional barrier which will be addressed in another section.

The Affects of Cultural Differences

A good illustration on how these cultural differences, and associated attitudes, can affect negotiations and the peace process can be seen by examining the expected behavior of how guests are to act in a typical home in each country.[12] In an Arab home, when visiting, one dresses respectably while in Israel one dresses comfortably. Arabs sit upright with their feet on the floor while Israelis sit in a more relaxed

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[12]It is acknowledged that many Israelis are Arabs or Jews of an oriental background. When discussing the difference between Arabs and Israelis, the focus is on the European and "westernized" Sephardi majority, of which the government primarily consists. The area of disputes between Israeli-Jews, Sephardi and Ashkenazi, and Israeli-Arabs is beyond the scope of this study.

position.   Arabs avoid conversation with the opposite
sex while no such prohibition exists among the Jewish
majority.   The Arab host will traditionally begin or
invite conversation; questions from guests are not
used to start conversations and disparaging opinions are
not offered.   Additionally, among Arabs, older people
talk first and are not interrupted.   Among Israelis,
there are no rules regarding conversation, anything may
be discussed by any party and questions are encouraged.
(Nydell 1987, 66-67; Shipler 1986)

Another example of how cultural differences can
affect negotiations is in the area of bargaining. In the
Arab market store owners may want a certain price for an
item but will mark it up exorbitantly, the goal being to
reach the predetermined price after the appropriate
amount of bargaining. This trait carries over into the
political arena where goals may be predetermined but
certain proposals or counterproposals are offered with
the expectation of compromise.   Additionally, among
Arabs, "yes" does not always mean affirmative and a
noncommittal answer or absence of a response does not
always mean "no." This type of dealing is quite foreign
to most westerners. (Nydell 1987, 21,61)

Applied to negotiations over the Golan, "we want

peace," or "you must withdraw completely first" type of statements may or may not be the agenda which the Syrians are really pursuing and, therefore, may or may not be expected to be taken literally. In addition, whether or not an individual is considered a friend or stranger will have an impact on how negotiations are conducted (Nydell 1987, 30).

Generally, Arab feelings toward the West and Israel, which they consider a satellite of Europe or a child of the U.S., is primarily that of ambivalence (Laffin 1979, 183; Reuters 1993). They feel they have been mistreated by the West and so have a strong negative reaction to Western ideas, accomplishments and developments, yet, they understand the need for progress and see the value of many of these contributions. Additionally, they recognize the place of modernization and yet believe that some cultural values are timeless and "thereby negate the social laws of history"; this attitude places a guard over traditional ways and values (Khalid 1977; Nydell 1987 7,8,18).

These differences, whether real or perceived, are in the minds of many Israelis and Arabs today, regardless of whether they are professional politicians, diplomats or negotiators. Many leaders in both governments have

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struggled against each other since Israel's conception and it is the feelings of animosity combined with the cultural differences which, over the years, have contributed to the mutual characteristic of distrust between both nations.

Jews, Arabs and Mutual Distrust

A second obstacle that Syrian and Israeli negotiators must overcome is the mutual distrust possessed by each party. Distrust is a deep rooted characteristic which is produced by both cultures. Among Arabs, extreme distrust is a major character trait taught from early childhood and directed toward anyone outside of the immediate family (Sauna 1970). Inter-personal rivalry flourishes among Arabs between families, ethnic and religious groups and outsiders (Berger 1962). This is plainly illustrated by the many conflicts, past and present, which take place between Arab nations, such as the Gulf War and poor relations between Syria and Iraq. Additionally, past domination of Syrian territory by foreign rulers contributes to their suspicion of foreign powers (Nydell 1987, 18; Racy 1970). In an article reviewing literature on the subject of cultural factors in the Arab-Israeli conflict, Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi

explains the concept this way:

> Arab suspiciousness regarding Israel can be well understood in this context: Being defeated repeatedly by a Western, technologically superior opponent, who seems to be very resourceful in finding new ways to humiliate them, and feeling victimized by stronger unknown outsiders are experiences which would contribute to clearly functional suspiciousness. In a situation where victimization and helplessness are the dominant experiences, it is better to be over suspicious than let down one's guard. The connection between Israel and Western colonialism is not only historical and political, but also psychological, since Israel brings back the same feelings of domination and helplessness. (Beit-Hallahmi 1972)

The Israelis, like the Syrians, also possess traits of distrust and suspicion. These traits are most likely due to a long Jewish history of oppression and persecution of them as well as deep religious roots which teach the "holiness" or separateness of the Jewish people from all other nations (Herman 1970, Khouri 1970, Rogers 1972). Historical events like the Pogroms in Eastern Europe, the Holocaust, the second-class treatment Jews received in most Arab countries, and the past Arab-Israeli wars have caused the Israelis to be very suspicious of outsiders. One writer describes three areas of distrust among the Israelis: one against the non-Jewish world, one against Arabs and the third against "international machineries" (Rubenstein 1971).

The mutual distrust between Syrians and Israelis

has been a serious impediment to the peace negotiations. Distrust is the reason why Israel won't give any land until "real peace" is secured and likewise it is the reason why Syria will not define nor sign a treaty of real peace until Israel vacates the Golan.

Religious Differences

Although not a major influence on the Syrian-Israeli peace process at the present time, an understanding of the religious differences, and how they affect the perception of each nation, is important to ensure this cultural barrier does not become a major stumbling block (Beit-Hallahmi 1972; Collelo 1988, 218).

Even though both Syria and Israel are officially "secular" states, religion has a profound impact on their societies and hence, an impact on individuals.

Foreign ideologies and belief systems are rejected by Syria primarily because of its deep Islamic roots. In traditional Islam, the world is divided into two camps: the realm of Islam, and the realm of warfare inhabited by infidels (Collelo 1988, 219). In addition to this, two other important factors of Islam, which have affected Syrian foreign relations in the past and could have an affect again in the future, are the teachings that

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Muslims have the duty to convert the infidels to Islam and that Muslim nations cannot enter into peace agreements with nations in the realm of infidels, only temporary truces (Collelo 1988, 219). This latter concept, until recently, has been the Syrian stance with Israel, and accordingly only a treaty of non-belligerency is acceptable, not a full peace treaty (Pipes 1991b, 45). Despite the theoretical Muslim viewpoint, that Jews are "people of the book" and not infidels, the existence of Israel as a sovereign nation has been resisted on the grounds that:

> Jews are...a religion and not a people or a nation; therefore they have no need for a state of their own. The Jews must assimilate in the countries where they live, which will settle the problem. The State of Israel is only an anomaly and an aberration. (Harkabi 1971, 72)

This thought has been carried from the area of religion into the realm of international politics as illustrated by the following excerpt of a letter, dated 20 February 1980, which was sent to the U.N. Secretary-General regarding the principle of non-use of force among Middle East nations:

> Naturally, as you know, the Zionists entity is not included, because the Zionist entity is not considered a state, but a deformed entity occupying an Arab territory. It is not covered by these principles. (Lacey [1980], 10)

This letter, which reflects the long standing and openly confessed Syrian attitude toward Israel, was subsequently sent to the General Assembly and Security Council.

In Israel, it is important to realize, that even though the nation is officially secular, minority Orthodox religious beliefs do work their way into the government and have an affect on foreign policy. The influence of the religious minority is described as:

> ...a pivotal role in the formation and maintenance of coalition governments...Taken together, Israel's religious parties have over the years generally commanded fifteen to eighteen seats, or about 12 to 15 percent of the Knesset. On occasion they have formed religious coalitions of their own...Because neither [major] bloc has ever been able to achieve a majority in the Knesset, the potentially pivotal position of the religious parties has given them disproportionate political power. (Metz 1990, 220-1)

In 1988, the strength of Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox parties increased significantly (Metz 1990, 221). The importance of this fact, in relation to the ongoing negotiations, is that the Orthodox religious minority, apart from some internal extremist groups, generally recognize the religious right for the nation of Israel to exist in it's present location (Metz 1990, 95-6).

The fact that one nation whole heartedly believes

that it has the right to exist while the other nation believes otherwise, is a major cultural and political barrier which, contrary to what appears in public opinion, cannot be erased overnight, or even over a few short years. Religious beliefs run deep and it is these religious roots which give each nation the theological support to hold non-compromising positions. Although religion does not seem to be a major factor in the present round of negotiations, i.e. the main topic in the media, the importance is due to the fact that the death of a leader, or a newly elected government, could quickly thrust this grass roots issue into the forefront of political events.

Communication Differences: Socio-Linguistic and Psycho-Linguistic Aspects

Communication problems cause another significant barrier to successful negotiations. One mode of communication which provides some unique challenges is language. Arabs view their language as miraculous, the language of the Koran and therefore inspired by God (Hamada 1990, 155; Jabra 1971, 174; Nydell 1987, 101). Like most other Arab nations, Syrians are proud of their language and, despite the knowledge that their dialect

may not be the sole standard for Arabic, they believe their dialect is the most refined (Collelo 1988, 65).

Rhetoric is a common, widely used and a much respected art form used by Arabic speakers. Mansour Khalid, former Minister of Foreign Affairs in Sudan, wrote about the socio-cultural influences on Arab diplomacy and commented on the use of Arabic:

> Arabic is a language with such a great potential for rhetoric, exaggeration, and rythmic exigencies that words are sometimes used for their own sake more than for what they are understood to mean...exaggerations are used not necessarily to emphasize a point but rather because of the linguistic exigencies of the *tawkid*, that is, the rule of emphatic assertion. A vehement reaction, loaded with threats, far from betraying a propensity to conflict, might be meant only to insult and humiliate the adversary, in the best tradition of the *hija*, that is, poetic invective, an important institution of Arabic poetry....The truth and untruth of the statement of the *hija* is irrelevant. (Khalid 1977, 141)

The fact that Arabic rhetoric might be used only to humiliate one's enemy may be true, but the past wars against Israel and associated threats which preceded the armed conflicts makes it quite clear that people like Nasser and Assad meant what they said. The problem with language is knowing what is rhetoric and what is a promise. If not carefully guarded, harsh rhetoric alone can get out of hand and lead to unfavorable circumstances, as was the case in the 1992 peace talks in

Madrid. In the wake of the Soviet demise and the victory of coalition forces in the Gulf War, Syria learned a valuable lesson when their "harsh demeanor" during the talks lost them points in the West and boosted public opinion towards the Israelis (Danzinger 1992, 30).

In regard to language, Israelis take a much more direct approach. Contrary to the Syrians, Israelis are described as:

> ...painfully, even embarrassingly direct; they are not given to euphemisms and circumlocuitious speech, even among politicians. (Laffin 1979, 201)

The above comment was beautifully illustrated in an 18 October article in the Houston Chronicle which quoted Joel Marcus, columnist for Haaretz:

> I'm fed up seeing President Assad's sourpuss face--his and that of his foreign minister, Farouk Sharaa. They behave, keep silent, and speak as if they are doing us a favor by their very existence. They say one word and rest for a month. They rest for a month and say another word, and again rest for a month. In between, Assad experts, both in Israel and Washington, engage in dialectics, discussing what the poet intended. (Haberman 1994b)

When these two nations come together at the negotiating table, words and phrases may not be understood and common meanings not shared. Thus, the reason why an agreed upon definition of "real peace" is so difficult to achieve becomes brilliantly clear. Israelis may appear to be too forward and blunt while

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Syrians may appear deceitful. Some scholars believe that Arabic has been a cause of fruitless efforts towards peace in past conflicts and a "limitation" of the Arabs (Sauna 1966).

Another barrier to the communication process is the Arab perception of reality compared to the Western perception. Internal thoughts and desires within Arabs which are contrary to the traditional norms and authoritarian culture, which inwardly they hate, cause them to act out the "proper" or "correct" responses to a given situation; in effect they wear a "mask" (Berger 1962, 136; Khatchadorian 1961; Nydell 1987, 35-36). This behavior causes outsiders to look at Arab responses and subsequent actions as contradictions, or more commonly, as lies. A good example of this is illustrated in a story told by a Christian missionary. He told a parable of Jesus in which two sons were asked by their father to work in the field. One said he would, but did not; the other said he would not, but later changed his mind and did. When Jesus asks the Jewish leaders which did the will of the Father, the Jews replied the second son. However, when the missionary told this story to the Arabs and asked who did the will of the Father, they replied "the first son because he gave the proper answer, the one which was

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expected by the father" (Berger 1962, 160).

This type of thinking can be a real challenge for Israeli negotiators or anyone with a western mind set. As one author succinctly explained years ago, Israel is not angry with the Arabs, just "puzzled, exasperated, frustrated and worried" (Laffin 1979, 182).

Another example of communication differences between the Syrians and Israelis is in the area of non-verbal communication. Arabs value politeness and hospitality and are sensitive to skepticism and criticism, especially if it infringes upon one's honor (Berger 1962, 140: Khalid 1977, 128; Nydell 1987, 27, 75). Israelis, on the other hand are typically more straightforward in their behavior and may appear rude at first glance, although they too are polite in a different way than the Arabs (Laffin 1979, 201,202).

A good illustration, which shows that the concept of cultural differences is not just a thing of the past that modern negotiators no longer have to worry about, can be seen in the following situation which appeared in a 1992 article on the Syrian-Israeli peace talks:

> At the start of the current round of Middle East peace talks, Arab negotiators realized something had changed since they last sat down with their Israeli counterparts. Yossi Ben Aharon, the chief Israeli negotiator with Syria, was missing from the

delegation...The Syrians weren't mourning Ben
Aharon's departure from the bargaining table. In
earlier sessions, according to Arab accounts, when
Ben Aharon wished to make a point of not listening to
the Syrian diplomats, he would get up from the table
and walk around the negotiating room, banging his
spoon against his coffee cup or humming, or both, to
drown out Syrian arguments. (Madison 1992)

Interestingly enough, the article goes on to
report a "shift in spirit" among the negotiators in the
following session. This behavior may be a bit extreme,
especially for a diplomatic negotiator, but it clearly
illustrates the more "open" behavior of the Israelis.

Communication barriers caused by the integration
of people from different cultures is not easy to
overcome, even for professional diplomats. The recent
agreements with the PLO and Jordan seem to prove that
overcoming these obstacles is possible. However, the
problem of motivation still lingers over the whole
sociopolitical issue; if, during the years following the
last war, Syria blasted Israel with rhetoric filled with
vehement threats and blood filled promises, and followed
them up with the support of terrorists and military
conflicts in the area bordering Lebanon and inside
Israel, how much faith should the Israelis place in the
Golan for peace option?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SYRIA AND THE PROBLEM OF CREDIBILITY

> "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or,
> the leopard his spots? Then may ye
> also do good, that are accustomed to
> do evil."   - Jeremiah 13:23

A final barrier to successful negotiations is the issue of Syria's credibility. This component of the sociopolitical problem addresses three main areas: the interaction between the Syrian government and its people; Syria's involvement with illegal activities on the international level, i.e., the support of terrorists groups, drug trafficking, and counterfeiting; and Syria's relationship with Iran. In addition to these issues is the question of Assad's character; based on his past record, can he be trusted? When all of these factors are combined and carefully considered, a dark cloud of doubt is cast over the sincerity of Syria's recently expressed desire for peace with Israel.

Syria and Internal Policies

An important point for Israel to remember when negotiating with the Syria, or any Arab nation, is that the Arabs do not approach foreign policy in the same

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"Western" way as Israel.   The aforementioned Monsour Khalid, writing about the socio-cultural influences on general Arab diplomacy, states:

> ...foreign-policy decisions are hardly dictated by an enlightened vision of the world. They are, always influenced by domestic considerations and by domestic cultural attitudes. Generally speaking, attitudes towards the outside world are not necessarily rational since they depend on traditions derived from cumulative historical legacies. These attitudes may take the shape of hostility, jealousy, emulation, suspicion, affinity, or cultural and ideological exclusiveness. (Khalid 1977)

This policy of internal focus is found in the cultural make-up of Syria as the Alawite minority government rules the Sunni majority population. In the past, Assad's regime has placated the Sunni majority by focusing on foreign policy issues, especially with Israel. Daniel Pipes, Director of Philadelphia's Foreign Policy Research Institute, explains the precarious position of Assad,

> The Alawites, who constitute about 12 percent of the country's population, are sometimes portrayed as a sect of Islam, but Alawism is in fact a distinct religion. Accordingly, an Alawite ruler in Damascus is repugnant to most Syrians, and this fact has shadowed Assad and the Alawites since their ascent to power in 1966. Muslim hostility in turn compels the regime to recruit heavily from its own community so that the government has a distinctly sectarian cast. Assad's overthrow would almost certainly lead to communal violence; merely to protect themselves the Alawites must stay in power. The result is a vicious cycle of hostility and repression...Anti-Zionism permits Assad to atone for the Alawite community's

(and indeed Assad's own grandfather's) past
friendliness to Zionism. It allows Assad to tap Sunni
Muslim' hostility toward the Jewish state, binding
his regime to the disenfranchised majority. (Pipes
1991b, 38)

In light of the internal conflicts which affect
Syrian politics, the recent change in Syria's attitude
toward the peace negotiations, and toward Israel
specifically, may indicate that Assad's regime will
focus national attention elsewhere. Syria may choose to
concentrate on Iraq or Turkey, or maybe even "channel
their fundamental competition with Israel into new
avenues," like continued support of anti-Israel groups
and terrorist organizations (Gold 1992). Either way,
this radical change in attitude toward Israel should be
viewed with caution by the Israeli administration.

Syria's Involvement in Illegal Activities

A major factor which casts a shadow over Syria's
credibility in the peace process is its involvement in
illegal activities at the international level. With the
almost total takeover of Lebanon in 1991, Syria has been
free to support active terrorist organizations, such as
the Iranian backed Lebenese Shiite group Hizbullah, by
providing a refuge for their bases (Gold 1992).

In addition to terrorism in Lebanon, Syria has

hooked up with the lucrative Lebanese drug trafficking operation, which reportedly brings in a $4 billion yearly profit in the trade of heroin, opium and hashish (Middle East Watch 1991, 163-165; Pipes 1991b, 43). According to a U.S. government report, the Syrian treasury received a total of up to $1 billion in drug money in 1991; almost 10 percent of their GDP (U.S. Congress 1992).

A third illegal activity, which was a joint venture with Iran, was the large-scale counterfeiting of U.S. currency. The purpose of this activity was twofold: increase finances in the country to offset their financial problems and to conduct "economic warfare against the U.S." (U.S. Congress 1992). If Syria is engaging in these illegal activities which culminate in the disruption of peace in the U.S., and in fact the entire world, could they be trusted when they say they want peace with their long-time enemy Israel?

Another factor which casts doubt on Syria's sincerity is their alliance with Iran. The significance of this relationship lies in the fact that the Israeli military considers Iran to be a major threat. In an interview with the Jerusalem Post, Lt. General Ehud Barak, Israeli Chief of Staff, commented on the Iranian threat:

> In the long term, this is the biggest threat. Iran is a terrorist state with nuclear aims. (Pinkas 1994)

The problem becomes quite obvious; how can Syria claim to want peace with Israel and still support the activities of an openly proclaimed mortal enemy of Israel, i.e., Iran?(Rodan 1994)

Can Israel Trust Assad?

Finally, the last issue to address is Assad's character and the character of his regime. Not only has Assad been involved in four wars, but within his own country he has persecuted his own people, the most outstanding example being the 1982 atrocity which took place in Hama where thousands of citizens, not involved in the Islamic uprising, were murdered, hundreds execution style, and where the entire city was destroyed and subsequently leveled by bulldozers (Middle East Watch 1991, 20). In addition to mistreating the civilian population, it is well documented that Syria has mistreated their prisoners, both foreign and domestic, using numerous forms of torture on their victims (Middle East Watch 1991, 54-77;149-151)

This issue of torturing prisoners is a sensitive one with Israel as numerous soldiers taken in 1973 were

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found killed after they were captured by the Syrian army (Gilbert 1984, 90).

In addition to the human rights issue, Assad has kept a heavy hand on his people throughout his reign by utilizing numerous security agencies to keep order in his country. This stifles any kind of freedom of speech and violates the personal privacy of the citizens (Middle East Watch 1991, 44-46; Pipes 1991a, 10)

Since 1989 Assad has made some major changes in policy to include: the ending of a 28 year state of emergency, releasing some political prisoners, permission for certain demonstrations, token political freedoms and even very recent permission for the several hundred remaining Syrian Jews to receive exit visas (Pipes 1991a, 18; Haberman 1994b). However, as late as 1990, there was no significant improvement in the human rights situation in Syria (Pipes 1991a, 19)

In spite of all of these relatively recent gestures, the fact remains that Assad rules his country with an iron fist, has no regard for the welfare of his own people, supports illegal activities and associates with countries which have anti-Israel policies. This is the man requiring Israel to give back all of the Golan on faith, even before he will negotiate the terms of peace.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CONCLUSION

This study clearly demonstrates that, even in a day
when high-tech equipment like laser guided weapons,
smart bombs and state-of-the-art aircraft are common
possessions of modern combatants, terrain still plays a
vital role in the defense of a nation. Even today, the
goal of every major military force in the world is to
defend the ground of their homeland. As nations strive
to build the most effective defense system, the terrain
or "ground" which makes-up their country becomes of
primary importance. As is true with any sovereign
nation, Israel has national resources, policies,
objectives, ideologies and freedoms which they have the
responsibility to protect. The Golan Heights, since
1967, have played a critical role in helping Israelis
maintain the security of their homeland. History has
proved that Israeli possession of this relatively small
parcel of ground has relieved much human suffering and
literally has saved Israel from military disaster and
possible foreign occupation and oppression.

Additionally, the possession of the Golan Heights

has allowed Israel to keep a watchful eye on her neighbors in order to prevent another Yom Kippur War from ever happening again.

Modern warfare is conducted in a myriad of different ways; however, the basic element has always been, is now, and will always be, the foot soldier. As long as foot soldiers remain the primary weapon in war, terrain will continue to play a vital role.

The geostrategic importance of the Golan Heights to Israel's security, both past and present, is clearly evident and cannot be over emphasized. The Golan provides some definite military advantages for Israel, such as natural defensive barriers and the much coveted strategic depth. These, combined with an "offensive" defense strategy, significantly increases Israel's security by providing real deterrence, as well as the ability to fight a war starting from an advantageous position. Further, it was shown that modern weapons are only part of Israel's overall military strategy.

In addition to security, the Golan Heights provide Israel with one of the most basic elements for life; water. This resource is fast becoming a precious commodity in the Middle East and nations are now taking drastic steps to protect indigenous supplies, as well as

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to develop new sources, in order to meet the rising demands of their people.

The Golan Heights are, literally, a "well spring" for Israel, providing a significant supply of water for one of only three main water sources for the entire nation. In the past, enemies of Israel have attempted to use water as a weapon, making protection of this resource of primary importance. Only while Israel is in possession of the Golan, especially the Mount Hermon shoulder, can she ensure that the headwaters of the Upper Jordan remain free to flow for generations to come.

The issue of the Golan settlements was shown to be important. These settlements are different than those of the Sinai, which they evacuated upon returning the Sinai to Egypt, and should not be compared when talking about the possibility of withdrawal. The Golan settlers have built, with government encouragement and support, a lifestyle which has a significant economic base that is growing. Additionally, the presence of the settlements and the associated military support helps to keep the Golan a deterrent against any future Syrian military aggression.

Finally, the socio-cultural and socio-political differences between these two nations were addressed as

well as the issue of Syria's credibility. After studying these two cultures it becomes quite clear that these two nations are worlds apart culturally and ideologically, and despite the fact that professionals are involved in the negotiating process, it is an influence which affects the very heart of the negotiations. It therefore becomes vitally important for negotiators to make every effort to better understand each other in order to learn the foundational beliefs and attitudes which affect the entire peace process. Traditionally, as far back as the 1920's, Israelis have made a better effort to understand Arabs than Arabs have made to understand Israelis (Laffin 1979, 183).

As far as Syria's credibility is concerned, it became very clear that Assad does not have a good track record when it comes to human rights or international commitments and cooperation. Some have pointed out Syria's faithful adherence to the conditions of the 1973 disengagement agreement as evidence of good faith; however, the motivation behind this behavior was examined and it was shown that the most likely reason for the relative quiet on the Golan Heights was Israel's military presence and capability, not Assad's good will.

Everyone would like to give peace a chance, but no one should risk national security in order to test the truthfulness of another nation's intentions. If Assad has truly turned a new leaf towards Israel, then he can show it by ceasing the fruitless demand of giving up the entire Golan Heights before addressing the issue of peace. Let him come to the negotiating table with workable compromises, not with demands which require Israel to totally abandon territory vital to their national security before he will demonstrate his sincerity. The return of the Golan gives an advantage only to Syria: removal of the Israeli threat to Damascus. However, this study has shown that prior to 1967, when the Golan was in Syria's possession, the Syrian's cruelly harassed Israel from the Heights, whereas Israel has never used the advantage of the Golan to attack or harass nearby Damascus or the interior of Syria.

The geostrategic importance of the Golan Heights is still the major issue in the ongoing negotiations between Israel and Syria today; until this problem is resolved, neither side will sign any type of peace agreement. Therefore, to dismiss the importance of the Golan Heights to Israel's national security in order to achieve a compromise towards peace is ludicrous, and to

cite modern weaponry as a defense of that position only demonstrates a lack of knowledge in the area of military strategy. Equally important, these withdrawal advocates completely disregard the critical water situation Israel faces in the future as well as the people who have not only carved out a life in the Golan, but have also made the land prosperous.

For its security, Israel should exhaust every means available to maintain a large portion of the Golan; and if this is not possible, then an arrangement with proper guarantees must be made which will ensure Israel's protection from possible Syrian aggression in the future. One acceptable compromise may be a demilitarized zone with Israel stationed to the _east_ of the Golan ridge line, and the extended maintenance of a U.N. peace keeping force. Either way, Israel must not come completely down off the Heights.

This study by no means covered every element involved in the issue of the Golan Heights and Israel's national security, water and civilian settlements. Neither did it examine any of the numerous other important issues that are being discussed between Syria and Israel, such as the Palestinian refugees, the other "occupied territories", or the definition of "real

peace." These additional areas, along with the issues
dealt with in this study, are among many that will have to
sorted out before any further progress can be made toward
a genuine lasting solution.

After many years of hostility, destruction and
loss of life, these two bitter enemies appear to be on the
threshold of some kind of peace agreement. The question
is, will it be a "real" peace. For many Israelis, the
reality of this event and its relationship to the Golan
Heights is best summed up in the words of Martin Sicker in
his book, "Israel's Quest for Security":

> ...the question to be answered is whether a Syrian
> signature on a piece of paper is worth turning over a
> piece of strategic real estate that Israel paid for
> dearly in blood in 1967 and which was critical in
> preventing the destruction of a large part of
> northern Israel in 1973. (Sicker 1989, 187)

At this point in time, the evidence suggests that
the signature is not worth the risk.

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VITA

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Captain Kalis is married to the former Dawn Marie Reynolds of Flint, Michigan and has four children. Jennifer, Andrew, Benjamin and Reneé.

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